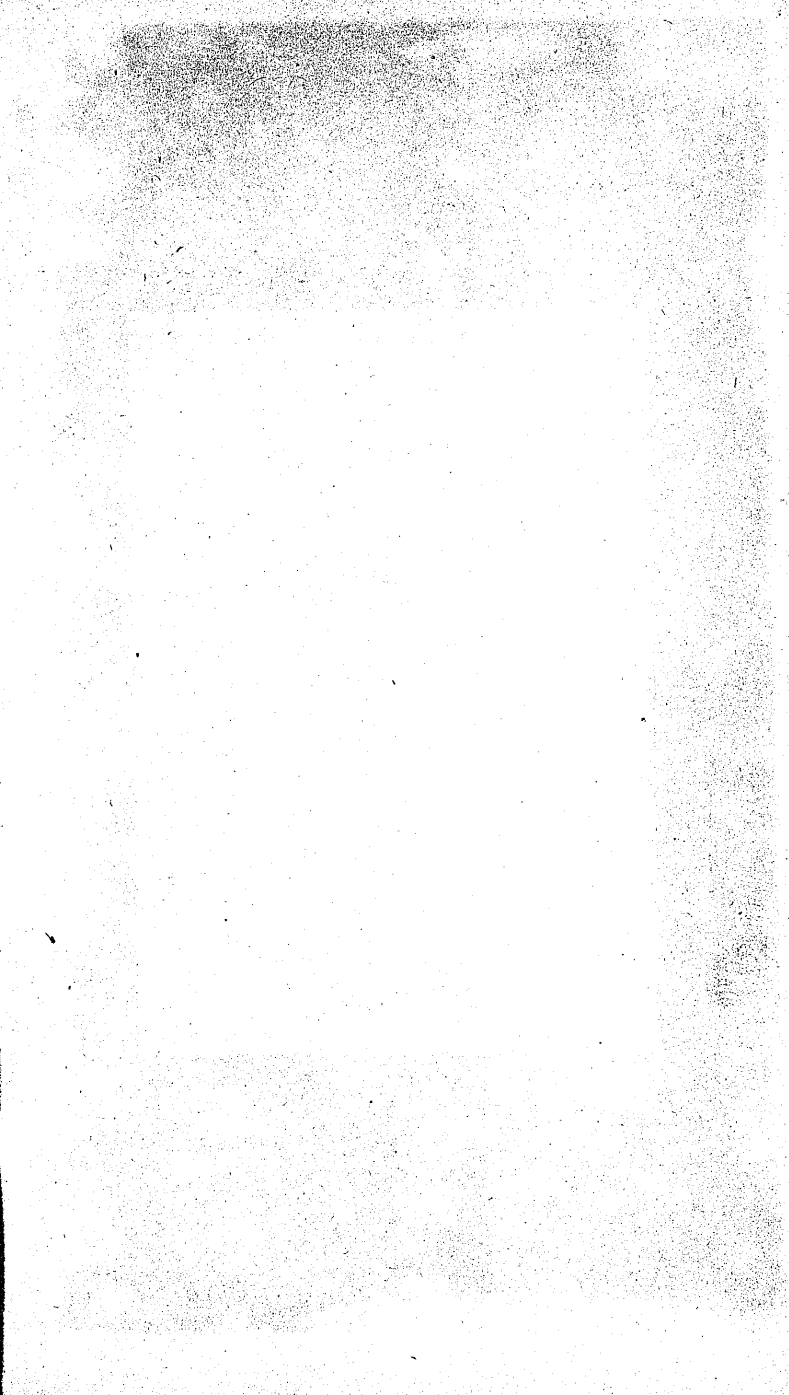




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**THE
CHRISTIAN CRUSADE**

THE CHRISTIAN
CRUSADE * *A STUDY*
IN THE SUPREME PUR-
POSE OF LIFE * BY
C. J. CADOUX, M.A., D.D.
||



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THE CHRISTIAN CRUSADE

CHAPTER I

THE QUEST FOR AN OBJECT IN LIFE

This one thing I do—I press toward the goal.—PAUL.

A BUSINESS man was heard to say recently in conversation with a friend that he could not help asking himself sometimes, when reflecting on the amount of time and energy he was still devoting to a successful business he had himself built up, "What was the good of it all?" The same question is bound to challenge anyone who gives himself time for a little quiet thought amid the rush and bustle of modern life. If the question were put in this form: "What are we interested in? What are we pursuing?", there would be no lack at all of answers of a certain kind. We are earning our living: we are trying to keep fit, or perhaps to shake off some ailment: we want to read an interesting book, to see a play at the theatre, to watch a match, to pass an exam.: we are making love: we are planning an enjoyable holiday: we are going to Church, or to visit our friends, or to attend a political

meeting, or to vote at—or canvass for—an election. The immediate tasks and interests of life are obvious: the daily, weekly, and yearly routine makes us familiar with them. They are also numerous: their name is Legion.

But when we withdraw in moments of thought from the stream of constantly alternating activities, is not the question bound to crop up: To what ultimate purpose is all this pother? What is it all for? Is it “all for” anything? Is there any unity capable of binding all these multifarious aims together, and if so, what is it? In other words, amid all these differing objects in life, can we find the Object of life? It becomes clear, as soon as we sit down to the problem, that no single one of our concrete concerns can itself be *the* Object. For if it were, why do we not confine ourselves to it? What right has any other concern ever to interfere with it? Some of our concerns are more important than others; some are very important indeed; and we may be able to name one that is more important than any other, perhaps than all the others put together. Yet no concern that is after all one of a group, even though it be the first in that group, is worthy of being called “our Object in life.” No: we want rather something that is big enough to embrace the whole group. No thinking man can refuse the task of attempting to unify his world of experience. Man is one, and the variegated world with which he has to

deal is one; and he cannot but seek to make his purpose in dealing with its manifold phases one also. We must frame for ourselves an Object in life in order that we may lend some sort of unity, give some sort of real meaning, to the endless multiplicity of our active interests.

And the Object in life, as we frame it, must be something that is not only comprehensive, but also at the same time definite. Though absolute and ideal, it must have positive content. A vague motto like "Be good" will not do, not because it is morally erroneous, but because it is too general to be brought to bear directly and successfully on the really difficult problems of practical life. For we need to know our object in life, not only for the sake of having a theoretical unity—a thing with which as Englishmen we are temperamentally inclined to dispense¹—but that we may have some better means than hand-to-mouth "intuition" for settling those conflicts that arise between two or more desires, each of which is legitimate in itself. In order to be in some measure forearmed against the day of dilemma, we need to know clearly of some supreme Value, by reference to which the conflicting claims of specific interests may be rightly adjusted.

We have to seek then to formulate that to

¹ Cf. the remarks of Sidney Low in *Edinburgh Review*, October 1914, p. 272: "Englishmen, in politics, get on quite comfortably without a *Weltanschauung*. Germans require it for daily use." The same is true in other things besides politics.

which we are prepared to assign supreme value, that one highest purpose which shall not take its place alongside of—not even at the head of—other things we call our “objects” as if it were co-ordinate with them, but shall embrace them all within itself, something comprehensive enough to be subserved by everything we ever think it worth our while or right for us to do or to aim at (so that whatever cannot be made in some measure to contribute to it shall be flung aside as unworthy), and yet at the same time something so concrete and definite that it can readily be brought into relation with practical life, so as not only to unify, but to control, to adjust, and to inspire.

On any big business premises—a mill it may be, an office, or a ship—there are many groups and departments, sets of workers engaged on quite separate and often quite different tasks. Many of the workers see and know very little about their fellow-workers in other groups and in other parts of the establishment; and the first impression of a casual visitor is one of bewildering multiplicity and confusion. And yet, as we know, not one of those groups or departments, not one of those hundreds of individual workers, is there, or could be admitted there, except as a contributor to a common purpose—the manufacture of cloth or chocolate, the voyage of the ship, or whatever the particular business-enterprise happens to be. Our homes, our

health, our daily work, our worship, our voting and writing, our recreations and our friendships, our studying and speech-making, our books and hobbies, our music and our art—are all so many departments, usually very separate from one another, having apparently nothing in common with each other except that *we* have a finger in them all. Yet is there no big business-enterprise which they all subserve, and which is the ultimate “reason-why” for our engagement in them? If so, what is it?¹

¹ Since writing the above, I have come across a striking statement to the same general effect, summarized, from the works of Dr. Maxwell Garnett, in *The Church as a School of Christian Education* (the report of a Congregational Commission, 1922), pp. 32f.: “A man’s ideas tend to group themselves into interests or connected systems of thought: *e.g.*, there is a group connected with home, wife, family; another with his business; a third with sport, or with music, or trade unionism and so on. . . . A man’s interests pull him in different directions, with resulting mental conflict and hesitation between two courses of action, and there is consequently instability of character and general weakness and inefficiency. . . . *The great desideratum for the achievement of full, strong personality is one single, wide interest, centred in one dominant purpose*, and this it must be the task of education to aid us in fashioning for ourselves.”

CHAPTER II

THE CONDITION AND THE NEEDS OF OUR FELLOW-MEN

Am I my brother's keeper?—CAIN.

IF we are to frame aright this supreme Object in life, we shall have to go about the task of drafting it with considerable care as to our *modus operandi*. We shall have to bear in mind what we are and from whom we can learn. There is no likelihood of our forgetting our own individuality: but we have also to remember

that we are social individuals, and
that we are Christian individuals.

Aristotle won a record in many different directions in the field of human thinking; and one of his best-known bequests to posterity was his brilliant definition of man as a "political animal." He meant by that what we should mean by the words: "Man is a social being." Egoism is a great force in human nature; but no sane man wants to live alone. Solitude is all very well as a refreshing change now and

then; but lasting solitude sends us mad. None of us can help being in some way self-centred: life and consciousness make each one of us perforce the centre of his own universe. But it is clear that, in framing any thorough-going policy for life, the fact has constantly to be kept in view that we are all of us only single members of a vast fraternity, the other members of which present every conceivable grade of unlikeness to ourselves, yet all within the limits of our common humanity — different, distant, and unknown,

And yet so like—perchance—in joys and griefs.

And though most will always be distant from us and unknown to us, yet with some, nay many, of our fellow-men, we shall be in continual contact, acting and reacting on them as they on us. Nor is this action and reaction confined to the intercourse of personal acquaintance: the interplay of life on life is something far more mysterious and difficult to calculate than what we can see and hear as we move in and out among our immediate neighbours. We affect one another in countless unconscious, unexpected, and unknown ways, as well as by those more easily observable opportunities that link man to man.

Such venous-arterial circulation [we may remember Carlyle says] of Letters, verbal Messages, paper and other Packages, going-out from him and coming-in, are a blood-

circulation, visible to the eye: but the finer nervous circulation, by which all things, the minutest that he does, minutely influence all men, and [by which] the very look of his face blesses or curses whomso it lights on, and so generates ever new blessing or new cursing: all this you cannot see, but only imagine. I say, there is not a red Indian, hunting by Lake Winnipic, can quarrel with his squaw, but the whole world must smart for it: will not the price of beaver rise? It is a mathematical fact that the casting of this pebble from my hand alters the centre-of-gravity of the Universe.¹

It is fairly obvious, then, that in legislating for a single life we are legislating for a great many other lives at the same time: and unless this fact is kept constantly in mind, the legislating is apt to be badly done. In other words, our Object in life must be framed with reference to the condition and needs of our fellow-men. The attempt has sometimes been made to formulate the great aim of life simply in terms of the individual's own personality—it is to be the fullest development of his powers, his highest perfection, and so on.² But experience has

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, Book III. chap. vii. We may compare "Gibbon's remark about the action of a Tartar Khan in the heart of Asia raising the price of herrings in the London market" (W. T. Stead in *Review of Reviews*, November 1896, p. 394).

² Goethe did this: see J. S. Mackenzie's *Outlines of Social Philosophy*, pp. 95, 228, 253 ("it must at least be allowed that there is no form in which the devil appears more radiantly as an angel of light than in such concentration on individual self-development").

confirmed what our theory would have led us to expect, viz.: that a life, in proportion as it is really guided by such self-regarding maxims, is exposed to the danger of real selfishness, even though self-perfection might be regarded as including a certain amount of altruistic service.¹ At the very least, self-perfection must never be left without the altruistic reference of it being made explicit and kept explicit.

Others then have to be considered at the outset and all the time: and in order that they may be considered, their condition must be known. At first sight it does not look as if there were any difficulty about this. We normally assume that we already know, through our ordinary channels of information, all we need to know for practical purposes about our fellow-men. While it is certainly true that we do know a great deal, yet it is easy for us to lapse into a very serious self-deception in this matter. A special effort is needed on our part to make the necessary correction in view of that veneer of pleasantness and decency with which civilization covers itself. We live in nice houses, walk along well-swept roads, travel in clean railway-carriages: all

¹ "If a man's ideas of himself and what he considers his own good are more central in his single wide interest than his ideas of his neighbours and his desires for their welfare, then harmony and justice are destroyed—and so, finally, is society" (*The Church as a School of Christian Education*, p. 33).

that tells of comfort and abundance is freely exhibited to our gaze. The written and unwritten laws of society keep disease and misery and filth as far as possible out of sight. Whatever harrows the feelings by being either acutely painful or acutely wicked is regarded as a violation of decency and propriety, and its appearance in public is accordingly prevented. Only rarely are such things seen; only in veiled terms are they normally alluded to in the Press or in conversation. It is right enough that this should be so: perhaps we could hardly retain our sanity unless our minds were relieved of the too immediate perception of afflicting and revolting things. But the inevitable effect on us of such concealment is to produce a tendency to forget—or at any rate to ignore—realities. And wise as it may be for us to preserve our mental stability, it is the reverse of wise to think and act as if that which does not appear does not exist either.

In the third volume of his *Stones of Venice*, Ruskin thus describes a piece of late Renaissance Grotesque:

A head,—huge, inhuman, and monstrous,—leering in bestial degradation, too foul to be either pictured or described, or to be beheld for more than an instant: yet let it be endured for that instant; for in that head is embodied the type of the evil spirit to which Venice was abandoned in the fourth period of her decline; and it is well that we

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should see and feel the full horror of it on this spot, and know what pestilence it was that came and breathed upon her beauty.

I can remember looking at that head when in Venice years ago; and I certainly did not want to spend more than Ruskin's instant upon it. But his words have a bearing on other things besides architecture; we might write in very similar terms of some human apparitions we see, who may well represent to us, not a period of decadent art, but a ruined and tormented section of humanity. We cannot endure the sight for long; but if we ignore the truth of which it tells, we shall be simply following the hunted ostrich into her fool's-paradise in the sand. It used to be said that the Tsarist government of Russia did not welcome the visits of westerners who came to poke their noses into the human dust-bins of the Empire; and indeed, though the Tsar and his court are gone, there are still some pretty grim dust-bins unemptied in that unhappy land. But of course, Russia has no monopoly of such receptacles. Central Europe and the nearer East tell a plain tale of the wrong that man inflicts on man: and the cup of suffering there must often be full to overflowing. And these things have their counterpart nearer home. When we recall the gruesome devilries that were enacted by various parties in Ireland during recent years, when

we reflect on diseases and how they are caused, on blindness, drunkenness, and madness, on destitution and unemployment, on the cruelties daily inflicted on helpless suffering women, on little children, and on dumb animals, such as are revealed from time to time in reports of the police and of our various preventive societies—we are sufficiently assured that the tragic sickness of the human race is not confined to any particular country or period, but is in our own midst, here and now, and at our very doors.

It will of course be said, and said truly, that this is only one side of the picture, that there are many good and happy lives, that it has always been the comfortless concern of satirists, pessimists, and Jeremiahs, to draw attention to the evil elements in society, that the world is after all getting better, and that lamenting and railing at the evil will not hasten its improvement. No doubt all this ought not to be forgotten: but our concern at the moment is to make sure that the seamy side, which so many things prompt us to overlook and ignore, shall not be forgotten. We want the facts after all, if we are to deal with a situation; and we must not shrink from facing them because they are unpleasant or because we do not want to be thought kill-joys. And just because one class of the facts is very easily shirked, it is worth while to lay a little special stress on it.

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In spite of spring with its smile, and youth with its enchantment, in spite of short felicities and glowing dreams, we see the race panting under its load of suffering. . . . For the majority of men existence is one long battle with hunger, in protracted ignorance and thankless labour. Bread is a conquest always dearly bought. To all death is preceded by a long procession of bodily ills, and to some it appears almost a remedy, so has their life been smitten and wounded. One mighty groan has been rising for six thousand years from this earth, watered with sweat and tears. . . . Doubtless, in the midst of all these woes, the chariot of progress advances, but there are stains of blood on its wheels, and we know but too well what it crushes in its course. . . . Side by side with the sorrows of mankind are its crimes, its basenesses, explosions of hatred, fevers of voluptuousness. It is not needful to multiply deeply-coloured pictures, or to track far the miry, bloody course of history. Is not the destructive force ever being unchained among men, let loose by themselves, and ever equally terrible, whether assuming the guise of pleasure causing death, or that of hatred enkindling fratricidal war? Without widening our horizon, it is enough to contemplate the crimes of one single city—the most brilliant let it be, and the fairest to the eye—and to remember what one single night there covers with its wings! ¹

¹E. de Pressensé, *Jesus Christ* (1865), pp. 23f. (Eng. trans.). Side by side with this indictment we may set Walt Whitman's lines in *Leaves of Grass* (pp. 23of., Everyman):

" I sit and look upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all
 oppression and shame,
I hear secret convulsive sobs of young men at anguish with them-
 selves, remorseful after deeds done,
I see in low life the mother misused by her children, dying, neg-
 lected, gaunt, desperate,

This aspect of the situation has been dwelt on at some length, not for the purpose of paining the reader's sensibility, but in order to put him clearly in possession of the case that has to be dealt with. We are social beings. As such, we are not called upon to afflict our souls continually by morbidly dwelling on the sins and miseries of our fellows; but we are called upon to take those sins and miseries into account in conducting our own lives. Sir J. R. Seeley, referring to the beginnings of Christianity, says: "Henceforth it became the duty of every man gravely to consider the condition of the world around him."¹ But while Christianity emphasized this duty, we hardly need to go to Christianity in order to prove it to be a duty. It is a part of man's daily work as a "political animal" to take the status of his fellow-creatures into

I see the wife misused by her husband, I see the treacherous
 seducer of young women,
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love attempted
 to be hid, I see these sights on the earth,
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs
 and prisoners,
I observe a famine at sea, I observe the sailors casting lots who
 shall be kill'd to preserve the lives of the rest,
I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons
 upon labourers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
All these—all the meanness and agony without end I sitting
 look out upon,
See, hear, and am silent."

¹ *Ecce Homo*, chap. xvii.

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consideration and to devise what means he can for

Abating this accursed flood of woe.

Nevertheless in actual fact it is Christianity that has kept this claim before the human conscience; and it is to the Christian plan for meeting it that we must now turn.

CHAPTER III

JESUS' PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

O wondrous Fount of Love!—E. CASWALL.

Jesus, . . . it has been said, liberated in the world an endless force of love.—T. R. GLOVER.

THE world of men is so big and so complex that it is extremely hard to get a bird's-eye view of its moral condition, and to balance the good and the evil in it against one another with sufficient accuracy to enable us to compare its state at one time with its state at another. We have no unit of measurement, and can rely only on general impressions which may of course mislead us. While therefore a comparison of the world of 25 A.D. with the world of to-day would probably justify us in inferring that the latter is considerably better morally than the former, yet it would be safest not to dogmatize too confidently on the matter. The point, however, is not a vital one for our present purpose. Even if the world is no better than it was in Jesus' day, there is no likelihood of our discovering a more radical treatment of its ills than his; while if it *is* better than it was then, there is all the more hope that his methods, if properly tried, will be speedily successful. We can

proceed then without delay to study his treatment of the world-situation before him.

A very earnest sense of the need of the world and a deep concern for human welfare are presupposed by his whole Messianic mission. The later Christian instinct was right when it ascribed Jesus' whole activity among men to a sensitive sympathy with them amid their sins and their troubles. And the explicit statement of this motive occurs not only in the discourses ascribed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel (which give us rather the disciple's devotional interpretation than the Master's own utterances), but also in the simpler and more strictly historical statements of the Synoptic Gospels. The sight of an ordinary crowd moved Jesus to pity. "And seeing the crowds he was moved with pity for them, because they were worried and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd."¹ He is often described as having compassion on people in some particular need.² He declared

¹ Matt. ix. 36; cf. xiv. 14, Mark vi. 34: a reminiscence of 1 Kings xxii. 17. "Why . . . is this word of His in indirect speech? Was it not because the words were spoken, not to His disciples, but to Himself, and just above the breath? Was it not because the disciples saw Him gazing at the multitude with absorbed and sorrow-laden eyes, thinking on their blind, aimless, hapless state? . . . Until at last His lips moved. . . . It was a chord struck from a human heart by the fingers of Omniscient Pity that bends over the world, and sees, not only deep, but *all*" (J. A. Robertson, *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus*, p. 127).

² Mark i. 41, viii. 2 (=Matt. xv. 32); Matt. xiv. 14, xx. 34; Luke vii. 13.

that he had come to serve others¹—to seek and rescue the lost,² to bring good news to the poor, release to captives, sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed,³ repose to the toiling and burdened.⁴ Often did he long to gather the children of Jerusalem together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings.⁵ As he approached the city for the last time,

he wept over it, saying, "Would that thou too knewest, even on this day of thine, the (things that lead) to thy peace! But now they are hidden from thine eyes. For days will come upon thee, when thine enemies will throw up a rampart against thee, and encircle thee and enclose thee on every side, and lay low thee and thy children within thee; and they will not leave one stone upon another within thee,—because thou knewest not the season of thy visitation (from God)."⁶

But Jesus did more than feel concerned. He surveyed and diagnosed the situation. He saw that the great public evils of his day were but special manifestations of a chronic evil deeply rooted in the personal—and therefore also the social—life of man. Like a skilful physician he laid his finger on the source of all the trouble—the sinful heart of the individual. Notice how he dealt with the paralytic's need of forgiveness, before he dealt with his paralysis.⁷

¹ Mark x. 45=Matt. xx. 28.

² Luke xix. 10; *cf.* xv. 4-10 (Matt. xviii. 12-14).

³ Luke iv. 18f., 21; *cf.* vii. 21f.=Matt. xi. 4f.

⁴ Matt. xi. 28-30; *cf.* xxiii. 4 (Luke xi. 46); Mark vi. 31.

⁵ Matt. xxiii. 37=Luke xiii. 34.

⁶ Luke xix. 41-44.

⁷ Mark ii. 5 and parallels.

For from within, out of the heart(s) of men, do evil purposes come forth—acts of fornication, of theft, of murder, of adultery, of rapacity, of malice, of false-witness; deceit, outrage, stinginess, slander, arrogance, folly. All these evils come forth from within, and defile man.¹

And not only did he diagnose: he also prescribed. His remedy was the submission of an ever increasing number of individual lives to the will of God—in other words, the growth of the Kingdom of God the Heavenly Father. The royal and paternal rights of God were to be acknowledged by each man, one by one, and so sooner or later by the whole human race. The *present* "Kingdom," as the inward royal control of God over Jesus and his disciples, was thus the correlative of the *future* "Kingdom," as the apocalyptic royal control of God over the whole of society. Because many of Jesus' utterances are concerned with his expectation of a cataclysmic establishment of the Kingdom in the latter sense within the lifetime of his own generation, we must not ignore the fact that much of his teaching is quite independent of any such eschatological schema,² and that the prominence of eschatology in the early records of his teaching varies in inverse proportion to the antiquity (and therefore the trustworthiness)

¹ Mark vii. 21-23; Matt. xv. 19f. "Stinginess" is the meaning of an "evil eye"—Deut. xv. 7-11; Prov. xxiii. 6f., xxviii. 22.

² E.g. (to take significant instances) Matt. v. 38-48; Luke x. 25-37, xv.

of those records.¹ The recent discovery of the eschatological Jesus has led some to declare that the attractive and reasonable historical figure formerly portrayed by liberal theologians is a figment, and that the visionary herald of the Kingdom cannot without unreality be modernized into a religious and ethical teacher for to-day.² An honest recognition of the place of eschatology in Jesus' teaching does not, however, involve any such negative conclusion. The late H. J. Holtzmann, one of the most learned and unbiassed of modern scholars, puts the matter thus:

Reforming spirits naturally display their superiority not at those points at which they intentionally or otherwise betray their origin, their past, their dependence, but there alone where there springs forth that which is strictly peculiar to their creative passion for growth. And (this contribution) is therefore also (something) new and animating, and at the same time also really capable of being appropriated by all those who, instead of treading any further—as slaves of tradition—(in) the footprints left behind on the ground (by others), are touched by the super-terrestrial waving of the wings of genius and as “sons of God” display something of (the) Divine creative power. In this then lies the justification for distinguishing—as the crown of Jesus' thought-world and of his life-work—the present Kingdom which fits itself to the laws of all moral growth and ripens gradually into maturity, all

¹ See Streeter in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, pp. 424-436.

² So A. Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 396-401 (Eng. trans.).

that Jesus said concerning the love for God and man that is to be exercised within it, from that eschatological Kingdom which forms the historically given seed-plot of all the primitive Christian hopes for the future. Of course even the eschatologists admit that Jesus, whenever the prophetic exaltation ceased for a time, brought himself down to everyday work on individual persons, to participation in their moral needs and tasks. Out of such mood, then, were born his sayings about piety and goodness, about love for God and one's brother, (and) about the loftiness of service, his attacks on pharisaic pseudo-sanctity, and his words of comfort. We are perfectly right in finding in this phase the eternal value of Jesus' teaching. But further than that it is apparent that the great majority of the Lord's words preserved in the Gospels tend in this direction (even Mark who goes in for apocalyptic Messianism has passages like vii. 1-23, x. 1-31), and that in particular the Collection of Sayings,¹ which aims at setting forth the characteristic (features) in Jesus' teaching, presents for the most part precepts and moral requirements, while the messianic—(and) therefore also the eschatological—interest is in comparative abeyance.²

The best modern scholarship therefore has established no conclusions that interfere with the Christian trust in Jesus as a reliable—nay, as the only reliable—guide for human conduct. The Will of a loving God, willingly accepted as

¹ The reference is to the early document called Q, the hypothetical common source for sayings found both in Matt. and Luke, but not in Mark.—C. J. C.

² *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, vol. i. pp. 416f. I have done my best with Holtzmann's German, and added in brackets words needed to fill out the English. A recently published work (*The Lord of Thought*, by L. Dougall and C. W. Emmet) goes so far as definitely to challenge the common belief that Jesus expected a speedy and supernatural cataclysm at all.

the norm for human life, is the only radical solvent for sin, the only radical cure for suffering: and the one supreme exponent of that Will is Jesus of Nazareth.

In his three parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son, we have the quintessence of Jesus' Gospel. The third of these exhibits personal, confidential, and loving fellowship, such as prevails ideally between father and son, as the true analogue of the ideal relation between God and ourselves; the first two depict the eager and self-sacrificing efforts which God makes in His quest for this fellowship with us; while all three parables portray the joy of the Divine heart when these efforts are crowned with success. It is not the will of God that one of His little ones should perish; and He is ever striving, by all the means that human freedom and His own love allow, to avert or undo such a catastrophe.¹ He loves His enemies, returns them good for evil, grants the blessing of sunshine and rain to good and bad alike, submits to sore trials of patience and to that

¹ We may compare the beautiful simile of Clemens of Alexandria (*Protreptikos*, 91): "God, out of (His) great love for men, cleaves to man, as the mother bird hovers over a chick that falls out of (the) nest; and if some beast creeps up and gapes over the chick, '(the) mother flutters round, bewailing (her) dear little ones.' And God (our) Father both seeks what He has fashioned, and heals the fall, and chases away the beast, and takes up the chick again, urging (it) to fly upwards to the nest." The passage is quoted by T. R. Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 149.

acutest and most tragic agony—the experience of violated love, to the end that He may be able finally to rejoice in finding that which was lost and bringing all into happy communion with Himself and loving compliance with His good and perfect Will. Such was the God whom Jesus came to reveal to men; such the Father for whom he demanded love as the supreme requirement alike of the Law and of the Prophets.

Some Christian teachers—in reaction against the dangers incident to legalism and casuistry—have commended as the sole Gospel injunction, “Love God, and do as you please.” If by loving God we mean loving Him perfectly, the precept is doubtless all-sufficient: but something more is requisite to provide for the long intermediate stage of a growing, yet imperfect love. That was why Jesus did not limit himself to saying, “Love God”: he went further and said: “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” Nor did he even rest content with that: he added a great deal of explicit and concrete teaching on our duties to God and to one another, not that he might provide us with a cut-and-dried set of rules for all time and so save us the trouble of thinking out our own moral problems, but that he might, as it were by a sketch, a beginning, a set of typical instances, show us the lines on which we might discover for ourselves what the Will of God means for human life in the various circumstances that face us. And

so he formulated his ethical teaching, laying down laws about trust in God and prayer to Him, about love for man, about the treatment of poor and needy persons and of enemies, and about the relations of men and women—not in order that his disciples of a later day might worship with rigorous and superstitious literalism the bare letter of his recorded words, still less that they might tacitly set them aside in deference to the wish of society or the State and on the plea that, because Jesus cared about men's motives, he was indifferent to the actual deeds they commit, but in order that he might from his own insight unfold the Will of God, and show men how to embody its great and abstract verities in the concrete medium of human behaviour.

Such then was Jesus' remedy; but how was it to be effectively applied? Amid a devastating epidemic it is one thing for a wise physician to know the cure; it is quite another thing actually to stop the epidemic. Practitioners in sufficient numbers are wanted, and so too is a willingness on the part of sufferers to undergo the treatment. Jesus bent all his energies to applying his cure; and for this he had to discover a way into men's hearts, and also to find his practitioners. His whole ministry, including the martyrdom with which it was crowned, was one long effort to induce men to accept his saving remedy. For that he taught—simply presenting

in words before men the nature and the desires of the God in whom already they to some extent believed. This of itself sufficed with some—since there is at least a measure of truth in our poet's words: "We needs must love the highest when we see it." For this he healed the physical and mental diseases of men, displaying in his own personal treatment of them that "neighbour-love" which he so emphatically enjoined on others. For this he endured without either hatred or resistance much gainsaying of sinners against himself, and not gainsaying alone, but bitter persecution and a torturing and ignominious death, in order that, in the manner of the old prophetic figure of the Suffering Servant of the Lord,¹ he might convince men of truths which his teaching had not brought home to them, that by his knowledge he might make the many righteous, and that the Lord's purpose might prosper in his hand. And in all this God Himself was teaching and healing and suffering in and through Jesus. Christian instinct, with all its misinterpretations, has been gloriously right in insisting that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. The most serious and flagrant heresy of the orthodox fathers of the early Church was their denial that God the Father had suffered on the cross.

But there are several indications in the story of the ministry that Jesus realized—and realized,

¹ The figure portrayed in Isaiah liii.

it would seem, with growing clearness as time went on—that the mere presence of the Messiah himself amid the nation, and the public proclamation of his gospel to the multitudes, even when accompanied by works of healing, would not suffice to secure the adoption, on an adequate scale and at an adequate rate, of his own unique policy of life. As his public ministry proceeded, Jesus seems to have spent less time in addressing crowds, and more in teaching small groups of earnest and responsive people. The work becomes more intensive, more personal. What need had Jesus, when he saw the crowds approaching, to sigh over the fewness of the workers and to bid his disciples pray to the Owner of the harvest to send out more of them into it?¹ Hardly because the multitude was too numerous to be preached to by himself with the aid of the Twelve. If these bewildered and leaderless people needed nothing more than to be told *en masse* about the Kingdom of God, there were more than enough preachers on the spot to do it. No, the concern of Jesus implies that the reaping he had in mind was something far more personal, intensive, and individualistic than public preaching. What these people wanted was friendship; and the very physical conditions of the case made it impossible for Jesus himself to give this to each of them. “He was subject in His earthly life to human

¹ Matt. ix. 37f. = Luke x. 2.

conditions of time and strength,"¹ and not even he and the twelve together would be able personally to befriend all those who needed befriending. Hence his appeal for more labourers.

That Jesus regarded personal influence, personal contact, and personal friendship, as the one really potent means of changing the lives of men for the better, is seen not only from this incident to which we have just alluded, but also from a study of his method as a whole.

The Gospel [writes Dr. Glover] began with friendship, and we know from common life what that is, and how it works. . . . Jesus brings men to the new exploration of God, to the new commitment of themselves to God, simply by the ordinary mechanism of friendship and love. This, in plain English, is after all the idea of Incarnation—friendship and identification. Jesus has a genius for friendship, a gift for understanding the feelings of men. . . . The masses appeal to him, but that is because he sees the individual all the time.²

The obvious impossibility of his forming these close personal links with more than a comparatively few people, moved Jesus to frame that master-stroke of policy, whereby the rapid progress of the Kingdom should be assured. He multiplied himself in the persons of his disciples. Thereby he not only multiplied units, but he multiplied multipliers. By getting the Twelve

¹ Stanton, *Gospels as Historical Documents*, vol. ii. p. 359.

² *The Jesus of History*, pp. 75 ff. Cf. *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, pp. 46 ("The personal relation lies at the heart of all Jesus' good news"), 186.

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into his net and through his friendship with them making them to become in their turn fishers of men, he set in motion a process that would go forward with accelerated speed, gathering impetus and power as it moved. What he had been able to do in and for the Twelve and the rest of his personal friends and followers, viz.: by the impact of his spirit, the spoken appeal, the living example, to draw them into fellowship with God, and to impart to them a passion like his own for the souls of men, *that* they were in their turn to do in and for those with whom they could enter into the same relation of friendship. And so by geometrical progression the Kingdom would grow.

Suppose we ask ourselves, how did our Lord propose to accomplish His great work? The answer may well be that this was mainly by the very living of His life as the brother-man in the spirit of love to God and one's neighbour which He taught as of primary importance. His cure of a few scores or hundreds of Jews scarcely touched the fringe of the great world's misery. But in doing what He could within His influence Jesus did His part, and as He gathered followers it would be that they within the range of their powers should do their parts, and thus as the spirit of His life spread abroad the kingdom of God would be growing in power and transforming the world into the new heaven and the new earth.¹

¹ W. F. Adeney in *The Hibbert Journal*, October 1920, p. 138. "Working intensively with the few was the method of the Master; in preparing His disciples for the work of the Kingdom, Jesus never despaired of the multitude, for He put His confidence in the training of the Twelve" (*The Church as a School of Christian Education*, p. 81).

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRISTIAN CRUSADE IN HISTORY

The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.—
The Apostle JOHN.

WE are not yet quite in a position to revert to the question with which we were faced in the first chapter. We have examined Jesus' plan of campaign because, if we are Christians, we are in advance committed to it: but before we pass on to its application to our own lives to-day, we must take a rapid glance at the part it has played in history. For the purpose of this survey we may divide Christian history roughly into two unequal divisions—the time before, and the time since, the triumph of the Christian Emperor Constantine about 313 A.D. It will be well, of course, to warn ourselves in advance that this date—like other outstanding dates—does not mark an absolute cleavage between two utterly different epochs. Much of the good in the earlier period survived in the later: much of the evil in the later had its roots and antecedents in the earlier. All the same, the two periods can be broadly distinguished from one another.

During the first period, the Christian Church stood for a morality markedly higher than that

of the Pagan world around her. The early Christians lived lives of purity and unselfish love. Such evidence as we have abundantly confirms the primitive Christian claim to innocence and moral goodness. The power of Christianity to change sinful and self-indulgent lives into holy and upright ones, is again and again adverted to. A couple of quotations, out of the great mass of testimonies, must suffice.

The Christians [writes an unknown believer of the second century] are not distinguished from the rest of men by (their) country or (their) language or (any national) customs. For they neither dwell in (special) cities of their own, nor do they use any different form of speech or practise a conspicuous manner of life. . . . But dwelling (as they do) in Hellenic and barbarian cities, as each (man) has been allotted, and following the local customs in regard to dress and diet and the rest of (ordinary) life, they display a manner of conduct (that is) wonderful and confessedly beyond belief. They inhabit their own fatherlands, but as sojourners: they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as aliens. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland (is) a foreign country. They marry, like everyone (else), they beget children; but they do not cast (away) the(ir) offspring. They spread a common table, but not a (common) bed. They exist in the flesh; but they do not live in a fleshly way. They pass their days on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, and surpass the laws by their own lives. They love all (men), and are persecuted by all. They are not known, and (yet) they are condemned. They are killed, and (yet) made alive. They are poor, yet they enrich many. They are in want of all things, and (yet) they abound

in all. They are dishonoured, and are glorified in the dishonour. They are slandered, and (yet) pronounced righteous. They are reviled, and they bless. They are insulted, and they pay deference. (While) doing good, they are punished as evil (men: when) punished, they rejoice as those who are made alive. . . . In a word, what (the) soul is in (the) body, that (the) Christians are in (the) world. The soul pervades all the limbs of the body, and Christians (in the same way) the cities of the world. . . . The flesh, though nowise wronged, hates the soul and wars against it, because it is hindered from enjoying its pleasures: and the world, though nowise wronged, hates the Christians, because they oppose its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and Christians love those who hate them. . . . (When) stinted of food and drink the soul grows better; and Christians, when punished, increase the more (in numbers) daily. To so great a post (of duty as this) has God appointed them, and it is not lawful for them to refuse it.¹

And again, right at the end of our period, on the eve of Constantine's triumph, another Christian writer is able to throw out this bold and confident challenge to the Pagan world:

How effective the precepts of God are in the minds of men, because they are both simple and true, is proved by daily experiences. Give me a man who is easily angered, scurrilous, unrestrained; with a very few of God's words, "I will (to quote Terence) make him as quiet as a sheep." Give (me one who is) grasping, greedy, close-fisted; I will straightway give him (back) to thee generous and distributing his money liberally. Give (me one who is) frightened of pain and death; (and) presently he will scorn crosses and fires and Perillus' bull. Give (me

¹ *The Epistle to Diognetos*, v., vi.

one who is) lustful, adulterous, gluttonous; (and) soon thou wilt see him sober, chaste, continent. Give (me one who is) cruel and blood-thirsty; (and) forthwith that madness will be changed into pure clemency. Give (me one who is) unjust, foolish, sinful; immediately will he be equitable and wise and innocent; for by the one bath (of baptism) all wickedness will be abolished. So great is the power of Divine wisdom, that, (when once it is) infused into man's breast, at one stroke (and) once for all it expels folly, the mother of misdeeds: and for the accomplishment of this there is no need of payment or books or nightly studies. These things are done gratis, easily, quickly, let only the ears be opened and the breast thirsty for wisdom.¹

Whatever else then Christianity might include in the way of creed and organized Church-life, it included as one of its regular and prominent features the earnest endeavour after a high moral ideal—an endeavour which there is every reason to believe met in these early centuries with a very considerable measure of success.

It is a fact of singular interest that common formulations of the Christian world-view and even of the Christian system of ethics frequently gave no essential place to the urgency of Christian propaganda. The individual's salvation was theoretically complete when he had signalized by baptism his acceptance of the doctrines considered essential, and as long as he abstained from such forms of sin as involved excommunication. The early creeds in fact contained no very explicit moral self-commitment, and no under-

¹ Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, III. xxvi. 3-II.

taking to preach the Gospel to others. Rarely do we find in early Christian literature any real anguish expressed at the thought of the fiery punishment awaiting numbers of the unconverted. This apparent self-centredness of much of the explicit early Christian philosophy of life renders all the more striking the genuine and passionate zeal which the Church as a whole regularly displayed—both in word and deed—for the salvage of heathen lives by the capture and surrender of them to the Christians' God. We can afford to pardon shortcomings of doctrinal theory if the life displays the unselfishness we are looking for. The Master's passion for the souls of his fellow-men passed into the very blood and spirit of the Church, and shaped and moulded her life when as yet her intellect could not fully and easily handle all the mighty reality of his work within her. Yet she felt ever the inward pressure of Divine Love, kindling within her the restless thirst for the welfare of men; and ever and anon we hear through the lips of Christian leaders and teachers the note of wistful yearning, of that true and strong concern for the good of their fellow-men to which we can give no more honorific title than its rightful name of Christian brotherly love. Only that—and that in overflowing, overwhelming measure—will suffice to explain the energy of the early Christian mission to heathendom.

Though I do preach the good news [says Paul], that is nothing for me to boast about, for compulsion lies upon me, and woe betide me if I do not preach it! . . . For though I was free from (bondage to) any one, (yet) I made myself the slave of all (men), in order that I might win over as many as possible. And I became as a Jew to the Jews, that I might win over Jews. To those under the Law (I became) as one under the Law—though I am not under the Law myself—in order that I might win over those under the Law. To those without the Law (I became) as one who is without the Law—though I am not without the Law of God, but am under Christ's Law—in order that I might win over those without the Law. To the weak I became as (if) weak, that I might win over the weak. I have become all things to all (men), in order that by any and every means I might save some.¹

The words put by the compiler or author of the Gospel "according to Matthew" into the mouth of the Risen Jesus, if (as is probable) they were not actually uttered by Jesus himself, reveal all the more clearly the missionary idea in the mind of the author and his circle:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go then, and make disciples of all the Gentiles, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (and) teaching them to keep all the (precepts) I have enjoined upon you. And behold! I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.²

To the same purpose, but still more expressive, is the utterance ascribed to the Lord in

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 16, 19-22.

² Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

that collection of his sayings known as the *Oxyrhynchus Logia*:

I stood in (the) midst of the world, and in (the) flesh was I seen by them: and I found all (men) drunken, and no one found I athirst among them. And my soul grieves over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart, and see not their poverty.¹

The fact that such utterances as these seemed fit to Christians of 75 or 120 A.D. to be put into the mouth of their Master shows how truly they had grasped, and how fully they were sharing, his deep concern for the rescue of human beings from sin and its attendant horrors. They believed that the Lord had come in order that not themselves alone, but all men, might have Life and might have it more abundantly.

Christians then were conscious of a great obligation to spread their religion; and spread it they did. Christian theory might often fail to give a logical place to the essential need for the convert to become also a missionary; but in temper and practice the convert normally became one. Of the way in which he did it we shall speak presently: at the moment let us note the degree of success that was achieved.

¹ H. G. E. White, *The Sayings of Jesus from Oxyrhynchus*, pp. 31-35. It is doubtful whether the words "their poverty" do not belong to the next saying, the true ending of this one being lost (possibly, as Mr. White conjectures, "they see not with their mind"). G. W. Wade, in *New Testament History*, p. 168, suggests: "they are blind in their heart, and see [not, poor, and know not] their poverty."

The facts of the case [says Harnack] do justify the impression of the church-fathers in the fourth century . . . that their faith had spread from generation to generation with inconceivable rapidity. Seventy years after the foundation of the very first Gentile Christian Church in Syrian Antioch, Pliny wrote in the strongest terms about the spread of Christianity throughout remote Bithynia; in his view it already threatened the stability of other cults throughout the province. Seventy years later still, the Paschal controversy reveals the existence of a Christian federation of churches, stretching from Lyons to Edessa, with its headquarters at Rome. Seventy years later, again, the emperor Decius declared that he would sooner have a rival emperor in Rome than a Christian bishop. . . . And ere another seventy years had passed, the cross was attached to the Roman colours.¹

It is difficult for us to estimate exactly the change effected by the early Church in the moral life and happiness of man. No means exist for measuring with precision the amount of good that was done. But when we consider on the one hand the moral purity and superiority of life within the Church as compared with life without, and, on the other hand, the steady numerical growth of the Church, we seem justified in saying that, during those early centuries, as at no other period of human history, we can see at work in the world a process of such perceptible virtue and promise that it bade fair, if only it could last, to cleanse society of all its outrageous and intolerable abuses. If reformers

¹ *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 335f. (Eng. trans.).

must learn by the experience of reformers, there is no more hopeful and encouraging precedent provided by history than the ethical purification wrought by the pre-Constantinian Christian Church.

But what was it after all that made Christianity spread as it did? We must here be on our guard against jumping to the conclusion that that element which we like best among the many elements in Christianity must necessarily have been the one thing that caused the Church to grow.

It baffles us [says Harnack] to determine the relative amount of impetus lent by each of the forces which characterized Christianity. We cannot ascertain, *e.g.*, how much was due to its spiritual monotheism, to its preaching of Jesus Christ, to its consciousness of redemption and its hope of immortality, to its active charity and system of social aid, to its discipline and organization, to its syncretistic capacity and contour, or to the skill which it showed during the third century in surpassing the fascinations of any contemporary superstition.¹

This is no doubt true enough: all the same we can with some confidence draw two conclusions in regard to the method of the Church's success.

One is as follows. The Church effected a real moral reformation: but it effected a great many other things. It imposed a certain doctrinal belief: it habituated men to certain forms of sacramental worship: it subjected them to

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 336.

a powerful system of ecclesiastical discipline: it called into being in course of years a vast army of venerated and influential leaders, the Christian clergy. Now while, as Harnack argues, many very different forces contributed to the extension of Christianity, and while the Christianity so extended proved to be itself a very mixed product, it would be only fair and reasonable to believe—on the principle that like produces like—that superstition in the Church produced and perpetuated superstition, and that similarly monotheism, faith in Jesus Christ, assurance of immortality, sacramentalism, and so on, each made its appeal in different ways to the pagan heart, and in proportion to its success perpetuated itself in the convert. So that in so far as the product of conversion was moral cleansing and strength, it was in all probability the fruit not so much of the Church's sacramentalism or credalism but of the Church's moral goodness. Not of course that any individual active Christian kept his ethics, his philosophy, and his cult, in separate water-tight compartments: but we can safely say that, in so far as the triumph of the Church involved a real victory over sin, it was because the Church was already herself in possession of the secret of true righteousness. Only moral goodness could have carried on a successful moral propaganda.

The other conclusion we can draw—and that with still greater assurance—is that the extension

of the Church was the work in the main of the rank and file, the numerous Christian individuals who were endeavouring in all the ordinary affairs of life to love their neighbours as themselves.¹ It is true that the Church had her preachers and teachers, her missionaries and apologists, her scholars and authors, and that they did much to secure the adherence of Pagans to the Christian faith. But

the most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the regular teachers but Christians themselves, in virtue of their loyalty and courage. How little we hear of the former and their results! How much we hear of the effects produced by the latter!² . . . It was characteristic of this religion that everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda. Christians are to "let their light shine, that pagans may see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven." If this dominated all their life, and if they lived according to the precepts of their religion, they could not be hidden at all; by their very mode of living they could not fail to preach their faith plainly and audibly.³ . . . The mission was reinforced and actively advanced by the behaviour of Christian men and women.⁴

¹ "Infinite love in ordinary intercourse' is another phrase of von Harnack in describing the life of the early Church. It began with Jesus" (Glover, *Jesus of History*, p. 81). Cf. the same author, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, pp. 186, 193f.

² Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 366f. Cf. p. 368: "it is impossible to see in any one class of people inside the church the chief agents of the Christian propaganda."

³ *Ibid.* p. 367f.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 385. So too the *Lambeth Conference Report*, 1920, p. 74: "It was the life of the early Christians which won

Thus it was the normal opportunities of human intercourse, with their infinite varieties of form and their infinite degrees of closeness and remoteness, of brevity and duration, which provided the Christian spirit of brotherly love with the fulcrum it needed if it was to be effectually

A lever to uplift the world,
And roll it in another course.

The Christian wife with her pagan husband, the Christian husband with his pagan wife,¹ the Christian slave, or master, or neighbour, or trader, or sailor, or physician, in particular the Christian martyr, "a spectacle to men and angels . . . the scum of the earth, the very refuse of the world"²—these it was who, despite much social unpopularity and suspicion

victories for Christ." A. C. McGiffert (*History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, p. 94) gives a good description of how Christianity was spread throughout Palestine by the dispersion, not of evangelists and missionaries in the strict sense, but of ordinary Christian laymen, from Jerusalem after the death of Stephen. So also (p. 112): "Christianity . . . was not deliberately sent or carried to the heathen; it went to them and made a home for itself on Gentile soil." Cf. p. 255 (of the valuable non-public, personal evangelism of Paul). Similarly, the late Miss Lily Dougall in *The Lord of Thought*, p. 214: "This method of man to man, woman to woman, propaganda was the means whereby the universal salvation became intensely personal. . . . It was a responsibility laid on every man, woman and child to sweeten the home, the village, the town—to convert the world by attraction."

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 12-16.

² 1 Cor. iv. 9, 13: cf. Harnack, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 367.

and much State-persecution, so impressed by their pure and loving lives the pagan folk with whom they most came into contact, that numbers of the latter were continually being drawn into the Church. The Christian layman was the Christian missionary apostle: the ordinary happenings that bring people together were all the pulpit he needed: his text was the heavenly Father's claim on His children's devotion: and the first, second, and third points in his sermon were simply the deeds and words that flowed from his love for his brother-man.¹

It is likely enough that the reader will ask at this point, If the case was thus with the Church and her work, how came it that this magnificent promise was never fulfilled, that—despite the length of time Christianity has been prevalent among men—the Augean stables are not even yet cleansed? The answer to this question involves a transition to the post-Constantinian period of Christian history. Bearing in mind the warning given at the

¹ Cf. the claim of Justin Martyr (152 A.D.) in his so-called *First Apology*, chap. xvi.: "He (Christ) has exhorted (us) to lead all (men) by means of patience and gentleness (away) from (the) shame and lust of evil things. And this we can prove (to have happened) in the case of many who were (formerly) with you. They changed from (being) violent and tyrannical, being overcome either (through) having followed the steadfastness of (their Christian) neighbours' life, or (through) having noticed (the) strange patience of (their) fellow-travellers (when) defrauded, or (through) having had experience of (Christians) with whom they had dealings."

commencement of this chapter against making too absolute or sweeping a distinction between this and the preceding period, we yet cannot overlook the profound change which the patronage of the victorious Constantine effected—or rather helped to clinch—in the life of the Church. The seeds of the change were sown indeed long before his time. From an early date and in an increasing measure the moral purity of the Church was tarnished by human frailty and wrongdoing. So long as the Church was being, or was liable to be, persecuted, her members were not likely to be guilty of the flagrant hypocrisy of professing Christianity for the sake of worldly advantage; but the leaders of the Church found it increasingly difficult to maintain within her the high moral level of the apostolic age. As time went on, she came to have her representatives among the wealthy and official classes, among the pleasure-seekers and the shallow-minded, among soldiers and magistrates and governors and courtiers, whose official duties seemed often to violate brotherly love—not to say common humanity; she had even to find room for Christians who had temporarily denied their faith under stress of persecution. Great efforts were made, by means of regulations, codes of procedure, synods, discussions, and various disciplinary measures, to safeguard the ethical standards of the Church against assimilation to those of the world; and

these efforts were so far successful that, on the very eve of Constantine's triumph, it was still possible, as we have seen, for a Christian to challenge Pagans openly in regard to the obvious superiority of Christian conduct. All the same the dry-rot had set in, and had long been spreading: and it seems impossible to deny that Constantine's patronage of the Church, whatever good may have resulted from the cessation of a savage persecution, had the effect of spreading the corruption further and of hindering any possible recovery from it. An unbiassed study of Church history impresses us unmistakably with a sense of the deterioration of Christian morals in the fourth and following centuries, as compared with the first three.

For one thing the alliance with Constantine and his successors made it impossible for the Church to recover her clearness of vision in regard to the use of the sword. The leading thinkers and a very large proportion of the rank and file of the pre-Constantinian Church had seen clearly enough that, if the ethical teaching, the example, and the saving death of Jesus meant anything for Christian duty, they meant consistent pacifism, the determination to trust to pure goodwill for the conquest of evil, without resort to punitive injury whether individually or in the service of the State. But various circumstances combined to prevent the adoption of this inference from being unanimous.

The result was that the advent of Constantine found the Church not only with a divided mind, but with a record already compromised by her soldier-members.

Her joy at the deliverance Constantinus had wrought for her was so great that it put her off her guard. She found herself compelled by the eagerness with which she had welcomed him, and by her own immaturity of thought and inconsistency of practice, to make his standards of righteousness in certain respects her own. Henceforth it was out of the question for her to insist on an ethical view and practice, on which her own mind was not completely made up, and which her great protector would inevitably regard as dangerous disloyalty to himself. Official Christianity was now committed to the sanction of war, so far as the practical conduct of Christian men as citizens was concerned, not only when they were convinced that the maintenance of righteousness demanded war—that in itself would have been a great and fundamental compromise—but in any cause, good, bad, or indifferent, for which the secular ruler might wish to fight. Further than that, the decision not only settled the practical question for the time being and doomed the dissentient voices, many and firm as they still were, to ultimate and ineffectual silence, but it tied up the freedom of Christian thought and made any unfettered discussion of the problem on its merits next to impossible for centuries to come.¹

That attachment of the cross to the Roman colours, which Harnack refers to² as the culminating point in the triumphant advance of the

¹ C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 262. The book presents in detail the evidence on which the statements made in the text are based.

² See above, p. 36.

Church, was in another aspect the monument of her defeat at the hands of paganism. The characteristic Christian ethic of goodwill and self-sacrifice promulgated by Jesus is henceforth limited to the narrow sphere of life left open to it by the far-reaching exigencies of the State. The State, respected by Christians since the time of Paul as at least in some sense the ordinance of God, now came to enjoy still higher honour as an avowedly Christian institution. The extent to which overt and covert paganism still dominated it, the extent to which its tacit assumption of the right to injure and kill contradicted the very essence of the Gospel, were alike ignored by the Church. The unexamined and unqualified doctrine, that the powers that be are ordained of God, carried everything before it. This fixed datum of Christian political theory, reinforced by the statesmanlike acumen of Constantine, proved too strong for what had once been a fixed datum of Christian ethics. The Church's doctrine of the State and of civic duty henceforth laboured under the permanent disability of having to subordinate a great and capital item in the Christian doctrine of life to the demands of a principle of government that bore branded on its forehead the stamp of its pagan origin.

It is difficult to speak briefly of any considerable period of the Church's history without somewhat laying oneself open to the charge of

exaggeration and one-sidedness. But there can be no mistake about certain broad facts. Undoubtedly the Church still stood for and attained a higher morality than that of the old heathenism; Constantine's own legislation showed striking traces of that more humane spirit which his new faith demanded. Yet the dominating interests of the Church were now for a long time rather credal, political, and liturgical, than moral. Much of her energy was devoted to establishing her own position and influence as a corporation. She looked for protection and support to Christian emperors, who secured and enlarged her property, defended her privileges, persecuted her disobedient and schismatical members, and enforced her doctrinal decisions—with all the usual machinery of coercive government.¹ "By degrees the Church's memories of the human life of Jesus faded into oblivion. Men lost the sense of history."² They also lost the sense of brotherly love. They

ceased to think about Christ and His Father in terms of moral character, of which they might know much from the analogy of their own moral experience, and dogmatised in terms of "nature" in a metaphysical sense, one alien to New Testament religion. How great was

¹ "From the moment when Christians attained secular power, in the reign of the emperor Constantine, they began to use carnal weapons against heretics and heathen, with no scruple whatever" (J. R. Mozley in *Hibbert Journal*, October 1922, p. 21).

² H. R. Mackintosh, *History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, p. 222.

the loss to the religious temper and charity of Christian life during the period of acute controversy in the fourth century and its sequels in the fifth, is matter of common knowledge. . . . Orthodoxy, as a test of membership in the Church Catholic, did more than injure conscience in religion, hinder the development of moral individuality—a vital element in personality—and narrow the range of love, the cardinal Christian virtue; it also tended to arrest progress in theology, which depends on fresh thinking rooted in original religious experience.¹

. . . the common run of Christians seem largely to have lost their savour as the salt of society. What made things worse was the dreadful lack of charity and good-feeling, even of fair-mindedness and honesty, shown by otherwise holy men in the doctrinal controversies of the fourth century, in which the Emperor and Court took a leading part. Surely, too, there was something amiss with the ideal of religious truth and value lying behind such rancorous zeal, when the fruits were so bitter. Somehow or other the Church had here missed its Founder's way.²

¹ Bartlet and Carlyle, *Christianity in History*, p. 341.

² *Ibid.* pp. 107f. Part II. of this work gives an admirable account of the changes alluded to. We may compare the statement of Heinrich Weinel in his *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (third edition, 1921), pp. 230f., as to the effects of doctrinal development on Christianity: "When Jesus was equated with the Jewish Messiah, and then with all the other intermediate beings recognized by the faith of the time—with the Redeemer-God, the Logos, Wisdom, etc.—it appeared as if the belief that he was truly all that, while others were not, constituted the essence of Christianity. Christology and the confession, not of practice, but of speech and intellect, brought it about that in them was seen the essence of Christianity, and made it possible for quite a different belief about God and a very much weakened or even an alien ideal to be able more and more to creep into Christianity, so long only as the Christology was confessed. Thus, as time went on, only those who held a

Nor, unhappily, is it possible to feel that the Church recovered her purity and insight in the centuries that followed those here alluded to. A cast-iron set of credal tests, a gorgeous sacramental ritual, a despotic clergy, a colossal unifying organization, an immense political interest and influence, and an unmeasured hostility to individual or sectional dissent—these, rather than the inculcation of human love and service, were the outstanding marks of the Church throughout the Middles Ages. The great outrageous wrongs that man has learnt to inflict on man—war, persecution, torture, burning, slavery, social oppression and exploitation of class by class—these the Church, where she did not actually employ them herself, tolerated and sanctioned, or at best antagonized but fitfully and half-heartedly. That broad stream of healing sympathy which took its rise in the spirit and life-work of Jesus and for a time flowed so vigorously through human history, now—when the nominal champions of his cause had the world under their control—sank for the most part beneath the sands of ecclesiasticism, and for the rest, dwindled into a few small rivulets of exceptional and personal effort.

doctrine about Christ different from the dominant one, were regarded as errorists, while the inner development of Christianity was able to diverge in the strongest way from Jesus' own ideal and belief about God, without anyone thinking that he had thereby fallen away from Christianity," etc.

Mercy and charity ruled in a measure in the labours of the local clergy and of the religious houses: but they were accompanied by an exclusive trust in almsgiving and an ascetic depreciation of family, commercial, and social life, which seriously limited their real helpfulness. In proportion to the size and influence of the Mediæval Church, her ethical mission was scandalously neglected in deference to interests of vastly inferior worth.¹

The Reformation gave promise of better things: but it was a long time before even Protestants in any numbers saw the unchristian wrongfulness of intolerance and persecution; and not even yet have they been able to lay aside the weapons of war. The traditional veneration for the letter of Scripture long delayed the awakening of the Christian conscience: If you really believed the Bible to be throughout the word of God, of course you were slow to discover the wrongfulness of internecine bloodshed, of witch-burning, and of slavery. And what a torrent of iniquity could be complacently endured, condoned, nay actively shared in, by pronouncing the simple formula, "The powers that be are ordained of God"! But slowly, very slowly, Jesus comes to his rights

¹ Dr. Glover, in *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 231, speaks of the Middle Ages as "that curious 'age of faith' when men believed furiously in Christ, fought crusades for him and burned heretics for him, but accepted neither his teaching nor his spirit as very real or serious."

again within his Church.¹ First, religious persecution is duly branded as an infamous violation of his spirit and teaching. Legislation becomes, by slow stages, humanized. Torture and witch-burning are abolished. The conscience of professedly Christian people is awakened and becomes sensitive to long tolerated abuses. Much of the treatment of others which law and custom sanction, and which society seems to demand, comes to be regarded as cruel and shocking. Slavery, after long struggles and heart-searching, is eventually abolished—first within the British Empire, then in the United States. War has not yet fallen beneath the final ban of the Church: but the events of the last ten years have shocked the Christian mind—if not yet into clarity of vision, at least into profound disquiet and concern. Inequalities of possession and social advantage, the wide prevalence of poverty, and the legality of owning vast superfluous wealth—things which in the Middle Ages, so far from being a reproach, were jealously maintained as essential to the very existence of society—are now openly challenged, and the challenge is one which, though it may long be avoided, cannot be ultimately ignored.

¹ Edmund Gosse (*Father and Son*, p. 316) comments in an interesting way on the comparative recency of the propaganda of beneficence as a leading feature in Christianity, "though indeed it seems to have formed some part of the Saviour's original design."

This survey is not intended to identify absolutely the triumphs of the real Christian spirit with various legislative reforms: the latter are at best but a rough testimony to the former. Nor is it meant to convey the impression that the changes here mentioned represented the unanimous or the exclusive judgment of the Christian community at the times at which they were severally effected. That community is essentially a *corpus permixtum*; and the various sections comprised within it occupy very different levels of moral insight and attainment, and ascend to fuller knowledge and purer life at very different rates. The purpose of this survey is rather to indicate in a very general way the proportion of emphasis laid by the post-Constantinian Church on what we may call central Christian concerns and less central Christian (or non-Christian) concerns respectively. There has been no intention of undervaluing or minimizing the considerable amount of genuine Christian love always active within the Church and, largely through the Church's influence, in the great world outside her ranks. The stream may have sorely dwindled, but it has never totally disappeared. But that the Church did in the time of Constantine take a wrong turning, from which she has not even yet quite receded, and which has involved her religious teaching and her ethical witness in grave confusion, is a fact which, in the light of history,

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admits of no denial. And the damage cannot and will not be repaired until Christian people have the vision and the courage to break loose from the hampering timidities of the past, and to order their lives according to that Divine standard of values in which he whom they call their Lord had such utter trust.

CHAPTER V

THE CHALLENGE OF TO-DAY

Whatsoever is done of charity, be it never so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it becometh wholly fruitful.
—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

THE ground is now cleared for a fresh approach to the problem we set out to solve. We have seen how essential it is that our one great Object in life should have very intimate reference to the condition and needs of this distraught and tormented humanity: we have studied the methods Jesus adopted and commended for meeting these needs, and the measure of success and failure that has at various periods of history attended the efforts of his followers to carry out his plan. The next step must be to match those principles of his with the world-need as we see it to-day.

The world indeed wears a very different aspect from what it wore in the time of Jesus or in that of the early or mediæval Church. Old landmarks have been removed; old institutions have been discarded; a totally new set of conditions seems at first sight to face us. Man's outward circumstances have changed beyond recognition; his mind and its contents are not

what they were, and in character he inherits the accumulated advantages of nearly two millenniums of discipline and experience. This age like every other age has its own special problems: and health and happiness depend to a very large extent on the right solutions to these particular problems being found. In politics, international and domestic, in education, in social service and social study, in economics and industry, in the organization of religion—tasks are set to the men of this generation which cannot be discharged by any simple adoption of the methods that have served in other days: and it is indispensable that our men-of-affairs in every walk of life should be constantly giving their best thought and effort to the settlement of the pressing and practical questions of the world they live in. Nor need we feel that the urgency and importance of these practical tasks is being overlooked or neglected to any large extent. We may feel very dissatisfied with this or that institution or custom or decision in the political or religious world: but we cannot complain that the problems of political and religious life are being neglected. Whatever may be the faults of the modern world, it can hardly be charged with ignoring the practical side of life. In a thousand directions agencies are at work improving in some way or other the lot of men, so far as skill, arrangement, ingenuity, or organization can improve it: and

nothing is gained by despising either the immense and unprecedented difficulties or the solid measure of success with which such agencies meet. Truth and charity alike require that we should acknowledge frankly and thankfully the real need and the real usefulness of a vast amount of the ordinary practical activities of modern life.¹

At the same time, while readily according recognition to the good that is being done by and for men in the mass through the existing machinery for corporate action of various kinds, we may fairly claim that at bottom the problem of the world's need is a spiritual one—the problem of the religious and moral state of the individual, that is to say, that in the last analysis the situation with which we are faced is actually the same as the one that faced Jesus. You cannot dispense with organizations; but all

¹ So a reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 9th March, 1922, p. 146: "Mr. . . . pours out his indignation and contempt alike on politicians and clergymen, schoolmasters and journalists, authors and artists, Conservatives and Radicals, landowners and Labour leaders, rich and poor. How does this impartial and universal denunciation of the unreality of all our existing men and institutions help us to discover where reality is? Has it not occurred to Mr. . . . that the obscure clergyman, of whose childish opinions he is so scornful, or the despised schoolmaster among his boys, or even, we will be very bold and add, the despised Member of Parliament moving about among his constituents or doing dull work in Parliamentary Committee Rooms, is perhaps nearer to reality, knows men better and is helping them more, than the composer of many pages of eloquent vituperation?"

would admit that their value depends not only on their efficiency as organizations, but also on the spiritual and moral quality of the men and women who erect and conduct them. We have as little right to ignore or deny the individual spiritual and moral factor, as we have to despise practical measures. And the great conditions of the "human" problem, if we may call it so, do not alter in essence from age to age. The elemental instincts of human nature, on which character is based, are the same to-day as they were, not only in the time of Augustus, but in the time of Abraham. Man is still a complex creature, possessing both an animal and a spiritual nature: he is still moved by the emotions of love and hatred, hope and fear, generosity and greed, pride and loyalty. The chief difference is that civilization has altered somewhat the content of these passions, and imposed a wholesome curb on some of their more offensive manifestations. But if we were to sit down and try to write out a list of the acts and feelings that are foremost in spoiling human life to-day, we should find that our list would tally very closely with that given in Jesus' great indictment of the human heart—fornication, theft, murder, adultery, rapacity, malice, false-witness, deceit, outrage, stinginess, slander, arrogance, folly. And the only radical solvent of these evils is the attachment of one life after another to God in love and service, the coming of the Kingdom of

God in human society through the extension of God's royal mastery over individual lives.

To plead that this and this alone is the really fundamental task of reform is very far from adopting the world-fleeing and world-contemning quietism of those who regard all practical remedial measures of a corporate kind as so much neglect of true religion. The temptation to shun our world-task, to let the world's affairs look after themselves, and set our heart exclusively on such a salvation of individual souls as has no vital relation to social or communal service, is one to be strenuously resisted. And yet, how easy it is for us to run to the other extreme, and, in our impatience at great abuses and wrongs, ignore the individual and personal roots of them. We cannot help, when we think of the sheer mass of evil, eagerly longing and looking forward to its total abolition, and plotting schemes for its removal on a comprehensive scale. It is not very difficult to conjure up in ourselves and to kindle in others a strong and even passionate resentment at the evils that men suffer, "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," and an indignant yearning for a happier time.

Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

But no sooner are these emotions aroused than

the eager heart is thrown back on its own powerlessness. The devil, from within his impregnable entrenchments, sends back but mocking laughter at our puny heroics. As well might an ant undertake to push over the Himalayas, as one enthusiastic individual undertake to put the world to rights. It simply cannot be done, and there is an end of it. Brought thus to our senses by the stern logic of facts, we tend sometimes to lapse into morbid sensitiveness. "Physicians," as the Vicar of Wakefield was told, "tell us of a disorder in which the whole body is so exquisitely sensible, that the slightest touch gives pain: what some have thus suffered in their persons, this gentleman [Sir William Thornhill] felt in his mind. The slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched him to the quick, and his soul laboured under a sickly sensibility of the miseries of others." Or, if we succeed in avoiding this unhappy malady, we may either become selfishly indifferent, or give way to helpless despair. But in none of these can we find real satisfaction or adequate outlet for our baffled eagerness. The old Squire in *Windyridge* carries us with him all the way when he pleads:

To brood over wrongs we cannot put right is morbid and unhealthy; it saps our vitality and makes us unfit for the conflicts we have to wage. And yet how easy it is for us to let this consideration lead us to the bypath-meadows of indifference and self-indulgence.

It may indeed be urged that the Kingdom of God, about which Jesus taught so much, was itself a large social vision—the “Golden Age” of the future—and that if we are to be loyal to him and his message, we must handle our problem by laying plans at least large enough for so great an objective. There is of course every reason why our plans should be large enough: but plans can be large in more ways than one. If they are large because they look away from the roots of social effects in individual causes, and contemplate men only in the mass, then, though they wear a semblance of comprehensiveness, they will fail through not going to the root of the matter. If, on the other hand, we have rightly understood the Gospel of the Kingdom, we shall see that, though Jesus had wide social vision, his way to the social ideal was always through the redeemed individual, that, correlative to the future Kingdom as a society, was the present Kingdom as a Divine control over a small but increasing number of individuals. Thus, while the immensity of the problem to-day forbiddingly gives us pause, and makes us change our tune from “How can I heal the world?” to “What is my maximum contribution towards its healing?”, Jesus’ Gospel of the Kingdom answers the question by making us ask another: “Am I a member of the Kingdom, and what am I doing to help others to enter it?” Important and

necessary as right methods of public organization are, they cannot furnish all we need to ask in the way of a road to bring men nearer to God. They leave nothing for the individual, who is not an official, to do but vote or canvass: as social efforts they presuppose—rather than include—that individual conversion without which social redemption is impossible; and by the same token they require rather than provide that spiritual and moral soundness without which human practice is apt to go astray.

It follows from all this that, while over the whole field many different specific services are required, the strategic centre of the conflict lies in the effort of Christians to bring others one by one into the Kingdom of God, to be, like the first disciples, fishers of men, to influence others in whatever way will make them most responsive to the claims of God's love, to induce them by any and every means to accept the yoke of Jesus. The duty of Christian propaganda is, in theory at least, generally admitted.

The founder of Christianity [wrote Isaac Taylor] left with his disciples the unlimited injunction to go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. This command, corroborated by others of equivalent import, and enforced by the very nature of the Christian doctrine, and by the spirit of Christian charity, is now understood and acknowledged, in a manner new to the Church, to be of universal obligation, so that no Christian, how obscure soever may be his station, or small his talents, or limited his means, can be held to stand altogether

excused from the duty of fulfilling, in some way, the last mandate of his Lord. Thus understood, this command makes every believer a preacher and a missionary; etc.¹

We are thus brought back to the old task of individual evangelism as the one sure avenue to social redemption. For it has to be remembered that Christian propaganda rightly understood means not only converting others, but ordaining them, not merely bringing them into the Kingdom, but making them in their turn fishers of men.

It will be remembered that, in our study of the early Christian Church, we saw that the great instrument of propaganda which she used was the ordinary Christian's love for his pagan neighbour shown in the normal intercourse of human life.² It was personal influence from first to last. Some, possibly an increasing number as time went on, were drawn into the Church from motives of fear, superstition, family-feeling, etc.: possibly some were won by the spoken words of the Christian preacher appealing to the crowd, or the written words of the Christian author addressing himself to the reading public. But we may be sure that the main factor, at least in all truly moral conversions, was the force of some individual Christian example, the pressure of some individual Christian friendship.

Now this primacy and efficacy of personal

¹ *Natural History of Enthusiasm* (7th edn., 1834), p. 273.

² See above, pp. 38-41.

influence is not merely a matter of the interpretation of early Church history: it is a thing we can verify from what we know ourselves of the way in which lives are changed.

We are not without experience [wrote the late Dr. H. M. Gwatkin] in the work of recovering them that are out of the way; and that experience would seem to suggest certain lines of action as possibly hopeful. . . . Personal influence is the first of these lines of action, and the chief, for the others depend on it. When we have to reclaim and train to better things some degraded creature who is living in rebellion against the order of society, we begin with neither the teachings of philosophy nor the services of religion, nor with the commands of a law . . . but our first and principal aim is to get him under the influence of a better man than himself. Till this is done, practically nothing is done. Teaching is useless without example, feeling is empty till it has gathered round a living person, and obedience to right commonly begins with loyalty to one we love. So it begins in the home; and if the home has failed to do its work, we have to provide some other guiding influence. For a little distance on the downward course we may possibly be able to right ourselves; but we soon reach a point where there is no recovery without the gracious drawing of one who loves us more worthily than we love ourselves. . . . Such drawing requires rather kindness and sense of duty than commanding genius. Many a man has been conquered by the winning goodness of his intellectual inferiors; and sometimes the innocence of a child has been the salvation of its elders from evil ways.¹

Probably even those of us who have never sunk into serious degradation will yet be able

¹ *The Knowledge of God*, vol. i. pp. 207-209. With the last clause, cf. Juvenal's words (*Sat.* xiv. 49): "Peccaturo obstet tibi filius infans."

from our own experience to testify to the truth of the principle here propounded. If we question ourselves carefully as to the agencies which have exerted an uplifting influence on our lives, we shall surely find them to be, not—or at least not primarily—those that operated on us when we were gathered with others in a mass, but rather those of a more personal and individual kind. For one who will tell of deep and permanent changes wrought in him through his being present in a crowd of people listening to a preacher, there will be many who will rather own to having been profoundly impressed by the example or influence or counsel or attention of some one or other who was a friend after the schoolboy's definition, "someone who knew all about him, and loved him all the same." The friend might have been a parent or other relative, a minister or Sunday-school teacher, a senior school-companion, or simply an ordinary acquaintance: but whoever he was, he went out of his way to show the affection he felt; by dint of sheer goodness of heart and character he won his ascendancy, and used it, not only rightly, but with full effect.

Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasselled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts; . . . they pass athwart us in thin vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But

sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.¹

With the attainment of the conclusion here presented we have virtually arrived at the answer to the question proposed in our first chapter. If we ask, What is the dominating purpose that can and should provide the ulterior motive behind all that we feel it our duty to undertake, what is that noblest of all ends that can be subserved by every right effort, what that prime interest by reference to which conflicting claims should be adjusted, what that grand all-embracing good that unifies all the many and changing concerns of a Christian's life?—here we have it: extending the Kingdom of God, helping and inducing our fellow-men to know and love God as their heavenly Father.² No right human

¹G. Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, "Janet's Repentance," chap. xix.

²"Dr. Garnett, having shown that man should be helped to organise his various thought systems or interests to form one single wide interest grouped round one dominant purpose capable of stirring the most potent emotional force of his nature, proceeds to ask what should be the nature of that single wide interest. From an examination of man as he is, and of the necessity in this twentieth century of his adjusting himself to a world becoming more and more unified, Dr. Garnett concludes that the ideal organised system of knowledge required by a

relationship is so special or so trivial but it may be made the means and occasion of drawing our brother-man nearer to God. Here is the *raison d'être* of the Christian's health and home-life and business-service and political activity and Church-fellowship. If glorifying and enjoying God essentially involves commending Him to others in loving deeds and helpful words, then we may accept as our conclusion the statement of the Westminster Catechism, "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him for ever."¹

typical citizen of our modern world is the conception of the world summed up in Christ's phrase 'The Kingdom of God.' And because love, or the emotion of friendliness, is the strongest of emotions, he urges that the only supreme purpose which it is safe to make dominant is Christ's 'Seek first the Kingdom of God' " (*The Church as a School of Christian Education*, p. 34).

¹ One of the few statements made by the heathen Celsus in which Origenes was able to agree was that "God is never and nowise to be departed from, either by day or by night, either for a public end or privately, in any word or deed at any time; but . . . let the soul be stretched towards God always" (Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, viii. 63).

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH

Give no occasion of stumbling . . . to the Church of God.
—PAUL.

It will be clear from the foregoing that this fruitful and reproductive Christian influence operates naturally—one might almost say automatically—over the whole field of human associations, and does not depend on being self-conscious or systematic. At the same time there is nothing to be gained by refraining from the deliberate organization of it. A good motive is not made inoperative by our becoming conscious of it; nor is a religious enterprise necessarily more successful if it is totally unsystematic. The embodiment of corporate Christian effort in definite forms and institutions gives us the Christian Church. It is not always seen with sufficient clearness that the idea of a Church—and One Church at that—is implicit in individual discipleship. For if it is the Christian's duty to love his neighbour, it follows that it is his duty to love his fellow-disciples. Now, you cannot adequately love one with whom you share the most sacred convictions and self-commitments of the soul, unless you cordially associate with

him in spiritual life and work as regularly and deeply as circumstances permit. The fact that his interpretation of Christian discipleship in belief and conduct differs from yours on some points that appear to you to be essential, and is consequently in your eyes a very unsatisfactory interpretation, does not entitle you to say he is no disciple if he affirms he is: for no disciple, not even yourself, is perfect; and if imperfection is therefore to be tolerated, where is the measure by which you can determine that he exceeds the maximum amount of it allowed? You are entitled therefore to admonish and rebuke your fellow-Christians: you are not entitled to excommunicate them. Thus, aloofness from the fellowship of the Church can find no justification in the plea that the Christianity she exhibits is not the perfect article. It is very much to be deplored that so many otherwise keen and wise young Christians give no support to the Church—on the ground of various just criticisms to which they feel she has laid herself open. Not only is their attitude at bottom incompatible with that adherence which they profess to the ideals of Jesus, but it discourages and weakens those members of the Church who are striving hard to remove the grounds for these very criticisms.

It is only fair to admit that many, who refrain from Church-life on the ground of the Church's unworthiness, are well-informed and earnest Christians who are moved by a genuine desire

to advance the Kingdom of God in the way that Jesus directed. Over against such we must take account of another and less estimable class of critics—those who are bitter and prejudiced against organized Christianity, who rarely or never see what the inside of a church is like, take no trouble to ascertain the facts in regard to Christian teaching and practice as it actually is, and cover their gross ignorance with a few chosen samples of Christian shortcoming, and who make wild and sweeping charges about the Church being asleep, or antiquated, or hypocritical, or obscurantist, or negligent of practical Christianity. A great deal of cheap and exaggerated censure is nowadays passed on the Church; and insofar as it springs from irreligion or removable ignorance or classanimus, it forfeits the sympathy of all fair-minded men. The Church is quite able to give a good account of her claims on the sympathy and respect of social reformers and the allegiance and support of all professing Christians.

Such a claim does not need to take the form of endeavouring to demonstrate her own unqualified success. It is enough to point to the fact that the Church is the only conceivable comprehensive body of people definitely committed to the way of Christ as the way of God, and to point also to the large amount of solid personal service of which every Christian congregation is both the witness and the scene.

When we realise the surprisingly pagan level to which the Church fell in the course of the Middle Ages—a level at which birth in a so-called Christian country, oral profession of orthodoxy, and formal baptism were sufficient qualification for Church-fellowship, when we reflect further how this affected for ill the relation between the official Church and the genuine Christian Crusade, and when we remember too that we have probably not even yet quite outlived and surmounted the *damnosa hereditas* of those evil conditions—we shall not be put off by the mere fact that the Church has not yet solved the social problem. It is very easy, but quite unfair, to ignore the solid mass of genuine and loving help rendered by Christians, both to their fellow-Christians and to others, through the familiar existing channels of Church-activity. The world would be markedly the poorer if these brotherly services were to cease.

Yet woe betide the Church if, because her critics are often in the wrong, she waxes complacent and self-satisfied. The fault is often with the critics, but rarely is it altogether so. It is generally worth while for one who is sharply and widely criticized to examine himself and see whether there is not something amiss which he ought to put right; and it is unwise for him to be deterred from this self-examination and self-amendment by the knowledge that much of the criticism is ungenerous and ill-informed. And

the position of the Church to-day is admittedly so fraught with difficulties and discouragements, that there is special need for a careful overhauling of her whole work. The shortage of candidates for the ministry, the unwillingness of the most gifted and promising men to undertake the official leadership of Christian congregations, the almost universal decline in the numbers of worshippers and Church-members, the chronic financial pressure, not to say embarrassment, the inadequacy of the Church's hold on adolescents and on Labour—all these constitute a problem which gives the best friends of the Church furiously to think. It is true to say that these conditions are largely accounted for by the sheer unspirituality of the present generation (aggravated as that is by the late war), by the new abundance of sensational counter-attractions, and by the welcome exodus from the Church of those who were in it merely from motives of social or commercial advantage and had not the root of the matter in them. Make all the deductions you wish on account of such causes as these, for which the Church is not to blame; there is still left an ample residue of shortcoming the correction of which lies in her hands and in hers only.

Such a situation, naturally enough, gives an opportunity for every crank with a bee in his bonnet to advance his own nostrum as the one thing that has been lacking, the one panacea

needful for recovery. And the Church has, of course, to protect herself against wrong-headed suggestions from within, as well as against unsympathetic or short-sighted censure or malicious "parson-baiting" from without. Truth to tell, it is often not easy to discriminate between the faddist and the prophet: so much depends on the angle of vision of him who gives the name. Our ultimate standard of values is necessarily so subjective a thing that what appears to one man an obvious step forward appears to another an obvious wrong turning, if not an obvious pace to the rear. But, after all, experience encourages us to believe in an objective and unified reality, not in the realm of physical nature alone, but in that of the eternal values and verities; and we can therefore take it for granted that a patient and sincere search for the truth must bring us nearer to it and nearer to one another.

Now in endeavouring to answer the question, What's wrong with the Church? we must know exactly what the chief end and purpose of the Church is. Every criticism implies the recognition of a standard which has not been reached, though usually the standard is only a vague implication. But here vagueness cannot be admitted; the problem is too serious. Has our preceding discussion led us to anything we can use as a test wherewith to measure the success or otherwise of the Church, or to prove the worthiness or unworthiness of the methods she employs?

Can we not say, We must judge of the Church and her activities by the degree to which they facilitate, encourage, and produce apostolic friendship between person and person? Is this given the supreme place it deserves? Is everything else subordinated to it, or is it itself subordinated to, and perhaps smothered by, minor interests? Are things so arranged that the universal Fatherhood and Love of God, the example of Jesus, and the interests of the Kingdom of Heaven are kept clearly before the minds of all, and never eclipsed or distorted by "the lusts of other things entering in"?

Or we may put the matter another way. There is a fine old formula which enters into the declared policy of at least one large group of Christians—"the priesthood of all believers." It is founded on the words of two personal Apostles of Jesus. Peter bade his Christian readers "As living stones be built up—a spiritual house—to (serve as) a holy priesthood, so as to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ. . . . Ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for (God's own) possession."¹ And John writes that Jesus had "made us (into) a kingdom (of) priests to his God and Father."² Apparently

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

² Rev. i. 6; cf. v. 10, xx. 6. Cf. also the story in Num. xi. 27-29: "And a young man ran, and told Moses, and said, 'Eldad and Modad are prophesying in the camp!' And Joshua, . . . Moses' attendant, . . . answered and said, 'My lord

the original meaning of the figure was that Christians render to God certain special services of love, prayer, obedience, and so forth: the idea of their being priests of God unto their fellow-men is not worked out or even made explicit. Similarly when the formula "the priesthood of all believers" became a watchword of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, it was intended as a protest against the Catholic idea that certain essential acts of Christian worship can be legitimately performed only by a specially-qualified and miraculously-endowed official, called a priest. But there is such a thing as the rightful explication of a traditional phrase: and part of that new light and truth, which God has ready to break forth upon us out of His Holy Word, may be the discovery and realization that this early Christian ideal of the priesthood of the laity involves not only the layman's right of immediate access to the means of grace, but also his responsibility for rendering certain very definite services to his fellow-men. It is sometimes said that the distinction between the priest and the prophet is this: that the priest represents the people to God, and the prophet represents God to the people. That is not the true difference between them, for we find that one of the priest's functions was to teach the

Moses, stop them.' And Moses said to him, 'Art thou jealous for me? O that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!'"

people the law of God¹ and so to represent God to the people, and that the prophet by his intercession often represented the people to God. To give guidance and assistance in religious and spiritual duties was the task both of prophet and priest: the only difference between them (apart from the sacrificial ritual) was that the priest acted as an official and the prophet as a free-lance. The priesthood of all believers, then, means more than freedom from a sacerdotal yoke: it means the duty of every Christian, according to his ability, to minister to his fellow-Christians in sacred things. In accepting Christianity, a man makes himself responsible for becoming the "guide, philosopher, and friend" of others, and undertakes to qualify for the high office, to which the true Jew of ancient times aspired, of "glorying in God, knowing His will, discerning essentials, being a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, a tutor for the foolish, a teacher of children, possessing in the Law a pattern of knowledge and truth."²

The emphatic acceptance of this doctrine of the priesthood of every believer by no means involves in logic or necessitates in practice the discontinuance of a trained and whole-time ministry. It does indeed seem hard to reconcile with the view of the ministry held by certain

¹ Micah iii. 11; Hosea iv. 6; Jer. xviii. 18; Ezek. vii. 26; Haggai ii. 11; Mal. ii. 6-7.

² Rom. ii. 17-20.

Christian bodies. It surely does imply that the Christian minister is simply a layman set apart for the more intensive performance of duties inherent in Christian discipleship as such. There are those who feel that the history of our Lord's life and of the early Church enables them to mount up into the inner counsels of God in regard to the organization of the Church¹ and read there this clear pronouncement that the Church should be provided always with a sacred professional staff of officials, whose calling should separate them by a big gulf from other Christian men, and whose exclusive privilege it should be to administer all the most sacred rites of Christian worship. Such a view, in whatever special form it may be put forward, whether in defence of the Roman hierarchy, of Anglican Orders, or of the professional dignity of Free Church ministers, seems to the present writer to do less than justice to Christ's demand that every disciple, whatever his calling, should exercise a true spiritual priesthood. But that is not to say that the professional Christian ministry is not a very necessary and very sacred calling. The work of Christ in the world has certain technical sides to it which cannot be efficiently carried out by those who have not

¹ "The Glasgow Professor of Theology [1858-9] objected to all proposals for the increase of scientific teaching in the College, on the ground that it was 'not consistent with the idea of a University as it existed in the Divine Mind'" (J. E. Carpenter in *Hibbert Journal*, October 1922, p. 190).

the special equipment and leisure which only a whole-time and salaried profession permit. Such tasks include—the knowledge of the Christian documents in their own languages, the investigation and interpretation of Biblical and Christian history, the comparative study of religions, the ability to handle the philosophical, ethical, and social problems connected with Christianity, the organization of congregational life, the public oral presentation of Christian truth, and certain other more special pastoral functions. The work of the Church cannot be done without a properly trained ministry, and the present backwardness of gifted Christians in offering themselves for this service, and the present tendency in the Church to undervalue sacred learning, are evil omens for the real success of the Christian enterprise in this generation. The harvest is great, and there is need both of many more labourers and also of men skilled to lead them.

But granting the necessity of a whole-time professional ministry, and with it of regular and properly ordered religious gatherings, we must not forget that, like all other good institutions, these things too bring their own especial risks and temptations with them. The besetting danger in ordered worship is formalism and artificiality: the besetting danger of an official ministry is the layman's neglect of his priesthood. And as we might naturally expect, the

Church has not altogether escaped these dangers; and part at least of the self-amendment incumbent upon her consists in rectifying the defects so introduced.

Thus, one feature of modern Church-life is the laying of an undue proportion of emphasis on the preaching service, and on the preaching in the service. Take the latter point first. People speak of going to Church not for worship, nor for fellowship with one another, but in order to hear so-and-so. Ministers in their college years are naturally and rightly taught to give great attention to the preparation and delivery of sermons: but they sometimes drop into a sort of hypostatizing of "the Word," or "the Gospel," as if that were somehow more real than the God who spoke it, the man who is to expound it, and the people who are to listen to it. The stress laid on homiletics, the studied cultivation of the preaching art, often leads unconsciously to a certain sanctimonious pomposity, an unnatural manner of speech, a stereotyped and traditional treatment of themes, sometimes even an unwitting insincerity. Such things inevitably impair the fellowship between a preacher and his fellow-worshippers. What adds to the distortion of values produced by this over-emphasis on preaching is the fact that two great preaching efforts are required of the average minister every Sunday, thus adding enormously to his labours and so withdrawing

him to some extent from other useful work, without any *proportional* advantage to the congregation. The one valid plea in defence of the system is that it enables both those who cannot leave their homes in the morning and those who cannot leave them in the evening to hear a sermon at least once a Sunday. But the gain is not worth the cost. If there were only one preaching service a Sunday, the domestic plans of Church-goers would soon adjust themselves to the arrangement. As for the "twicers," no man either needs or can properly assimilate more than one good sermon on a Sunday; and if he were relieved of the duty of having to come twice, he would be freer to take his part in the all-important work of the Sunday-School. Let it not be thought that I undervalue the importance of good preaching: I hold no brief for "thin gruel"; but I submit that the amount of preaching demanded from ministers to-day inevitably impoverishes the quality of it, that the stress laid on its technicalities often makes it a little artificial, and that the prominent place given to it—at least in the Free Churches—has been allowed to obscure the elements of corporate Christian fellowship and devotion.

Another unfortunate consequence of "officializing" our religious gatherings is that too little place has been left for overt co-operation between minister and people. The order of service in each place has become largely stereo-

typed, and rarely does it leave room for the fellowship of silent prayer, or for the extempore prayer of worshippers, or for the free interchange of thought and exhortation.¹ If the difficulties in the way of this last be thought prohibitive, at least there ought to be regular and studied co-operation at other times and places between minister and people, not in the external services of the Church alone, the serving of tables, and so on, but in the deeper things, particularly in the urgent problems of Christian ethics, where the practical layman by himself will go wrong through lack of clear vision and accurate thinking, and the minister by himself will flounder from his inevitable lack of practical experience. Broadly speaking, this lay-co-operation in solving the problems of Christian life has hardly yet been attempted in our churches; and the reason clearly is that people regard the presence of an official teacher as a reason why they need undertake no intellectual responsibility whatever.

Perhaps the most obvious source of artificiality in modern worship is the Church's use of music. Here again it is the abuse, and not the

¹ Cf. B. Martin in *The Congregational Quarterly*, October 1923, pp. 467f. *The Church as a School of Christian Education* speaks (p. 47) of "the loss to the zest and receptivity of a company of people who meet only as passive hearers of the truth they profess to live by. The educational efficiency of Church services must be enormously depreciated by the constant and unbroken passivity of the worshippers."

use, of which we are thinking. Let us concede gladly the spiritual value of good music, the presence of God in the beautiful being as real as His presence in the true. Let us admit the wholesome effect of singing hymns together. Let us grant the need of choirs, and the value of anthems. Let us recognize further that in sacred poetry, as in all devotion, a much larger latitude in wording is allowable than in an exact theological or intellectual statement. But there is a limit to all things. In some churches, the choir has been allowed to develop into a narrow clique of people interested in music for its own sake and touchily jealous of their privileges. Many choir-members are in the habit of examining the music in their hymn-books while the minister is reading, praying, or preaching; and they do this, not with any intention to be unsympathetic, but through the thoughtless assumption of a special prerogative painfully out of keeping with the spirit of corporate worship. Of course there must be a paid organist, and often he is not a member of the church; in some places a paid soloist also is employed. The musical interest is often dominant: items left to the choice of the choirmaster are frequently chosen simply for the merit of the music and its suitability to the power of the singers, but without any due regard to the fitness of the words, and irrespective of whether those who sing and hear them will mean them or ought to mean

them. I have known a congregation of cultured and intelligent people sit complacently and admiringly while a healthy schoolboy of fourteen with a celestial voice sang:

Angels ever bright and fair,
Take, oh take me to your care!

The fact that probably not a person in the building, least of all the singer himself, wanted any angels to take him to their care, would have seemed to the congregation an utter irrelevance, even supposing (what is unlikely) that it occurred to their minds at all. The free use of the Psalms in public worship often occasions the singing of words that are, without explanation (which naturally they do not get), simply meaningless: thus:

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them,

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools.

Sometimes even elementary Christian notions are violated, *e.g.*:

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Ye shall be slain, all of you; as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

A particularly bad case of this sort of thing is a popular anthem based on Psalm cxxxvii.,

expressing the grief and hatred felt by the Jewish exiles as they sat and wept by the waters of Babylon. "Happy shall he be," say they to the tyrant city, "that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock." These savage and inhuman words, duly adapted to the metrical requirements of the music, are not infrequently sung in Christian worship. They were once sung in my presence by an "augmented choir" in a large city church. My previous protests to the choirmaster and the deacons were fruitless: they did not dare, so I was told, to ask the choir not to sing it, as it had been so long practised. It did not apparently occur to anyone else to object to it. It was sung with gusto; and some members of the choir, who were congratulating each other afterwards on the success of the anthem, met my astonished protests with astonishment of their own, and with the naïve plea that that anthem had been sung in all the Free Churches in the city! (In the Anglican Churches of course the psalm in question is read at "Evening Prayer" on the twenty-eighth day of the month.) Now Christian people are not savage and cruel; and the fact that not choirs alone, but whole congregations, can tolerate language of this kind in the service, and be conscious of no need for any protest against it, is an unmistakable proof that, either through the professional zeal of our musical

friends or through some other cause, a degree of artificiality has crept into our worship which is nothing less than shameful and alarming.

The general conservatism of church-going people is an obstacle to reforms not only in the matter of music but in connection with the use of the Bible also. The persistent use of the Authorized Version is hard to reconcile with a simple and passionate love of truth. The sheer literary beauty of this version has so endeared it to the Englishman's heart that often he prefers it on that ground alone, despite its multitude of now removable inaccuracies and obscurities. These are so serious that it is to all intents and purposes impossible to keep hold of the thread of a great many Old Testament prophecies, and most of the doctrinal reasoning in Paul, if one is confined to the English of the Authorized. Literary beauty, and the religious atmosphere which usage has associated with it, are of course real values: but after all, what the modern worshipper wants first, when he opens his Bible or has it read to him, is not musical and stately English, but the simple meaning of what the Biblical author wrote. If he can get that accurately, it can be trusted to bring with it as much beauty and music as the worshipper needs: if he cannot get it, no mere literary merit in the translation will supply his wants, and he will have good cause to complain that he is being put off with an inferior article.

It is the clear duty of those leading public worship to give to their congregations the most truthful version of the original they can procure, whether that be the Revised Version of 1880-84 or one of the later translations now available.

But in this connection a further word may be said in regard to the exclusive use of the Bible as the Christian lectionary. This exclusiveness was natural enough in the times when Christians believed the Bible to have a monopoly of Divinely revealed truth, and to be equally sacred and inspired throughout. But such a view as this, involving the acceptance of the Bible as the *ultimate* standard of faith and morals, can no longer be seriously defended. Everyone knows that the Bible *contains* Divine truth, without which the mind of man would be infinitely poorer, and that what it contains is unique in the sense that much of it is not to be had elsewhere: but intelligent Christians have also long recognized two other facts: (1) that much of the contents of the Bible reflects rather human error and shortsightedness than Divine truth, and is therefore unsuitable—and in fact largely unused in consequence—for Christian worship; (2) that much non-Biblical literature contains Divinely inspired and helpful passages, just as truly the word of God as the best parts of the Bible, if as a rule less original and penetrating. The ultimate authority as to what is of God must always be in the last resort some-

thing within the human mind and conscience, the one region where God and ourselves come into immediate contact; and however unwilling traditionalists may be to admit it, the day has gone when any external or written document could claim to hold the monopoly of Divine guidance or be our really ultimate authority in religion. God has much to teach us through the Bible: He has also much to teach us through other books. Now that we know this, would it not be as well to act accordingly, and give our congregations the benefit of hearing something at least of what His Spirit has prompted in the minds of writers belonging to other times and places? ¹

But far more serious than all these imperfections of procedure, and more damaging to the Church's record and influence as the trustee of the Christian ethic of fellowship and redemptive love, has been that feebleness of grasp, that dimness of vision, with which she has for so long been apprehending the essentials of Christian living as they touch politics, and which reached its climax in the collapse of ethical insight during the recent war. The Church had been worshipping Jesus for centuries, and teaching her members to look

¹ Rev. J. M. Connell has a telling article on this subject in *The Hibbert Journal* for October 1920 (pp. 93-100), entitled "A Plea for an Extended Lectionary." He makes many useful practical suggestions—among others an allusion to his own admirable compilation, *A Book of Devotional Readings from the Literature of Christendom* (Longmans, 1913).

to Him as Pattern and as King; she had treated all his reported words with profound reverence. Now if one thing is clear about Jesus, if there is one thing distinctive of him as an ethical teacher, it was the emphatic negative. He gave to the common notion that injury is a right, useful, and necessary means for countering wrong. The only meaning we can give to the homage to Satan which figures in his temptation as the price of world-dominion is that it represents the one obvious pre-requisite to world-dominion, viz., successful war. When strenuously opposed, he refuses—despite the naturalness of the step for a Messiah and despite a righteous cause and warlike compatriots—to resort to arms: the direct consequence of this refusal was the Cross—the apparent and momentary triumph of wrong, incurred through loyalty to ethical conviction, but at the same time (as Christian instinct has realized) the mightiest triumph over sin God ever won through a human life. A careful study of the story of Jesus' ministry and death rules out the antique notion that he was merely carrying out an arbitrary, inscrutable, Divinely-settled "plan of salvation," so unique as to have no relation to the great moral laws to which God calls all His children to submit. The Sermon on the Mount and the demand that disciples should take up the cross clearly show that Jesus believed the moral principle he was acting under to be as binding on them as on

himself—not because the world was coming to an end, but because they were to become sons of their heavenly Father. With all this before her eyes, confirmed as it is by the wide pacifism of the early Christians, their frequent martyrdoms, and their victorious passive resistance to persecution, the Church of to-day might have been expected to know well enough what the Lordship of Christ and salvation through his Cross meant for Christian conduct in regard to the wrongdoing of others. The circumstances of 1914 were very different, we are told, from those of Jesus' day. But what difference was there that involved any new principle? At bottom the question that faced the Church in 1914 was the same as that which faced Jesus in his temptation in 26 A.D., viz., how should the members of the Kingdom of God oppose the outrageous iniquities of the world they live in? It is indeed hard to see how thinking men, who make everything of Jesus and take their Gospels seriously, can have missed the obvious answer to that question. Yet so it was. From whatever cause, the Church was stampeded—not in our land alone but in all the belligerent lands—into an eager support of the war, with its violent and hopeless rupture of all those links of fellowship which alone can serve as the medium of a sobering and cleansing influence. Everywhere preachers of the Prince of Peace, ministers of him who had found through his refusal of the sword

the path to Saviourhood, used their influence vigorously to urge young men to go to the fighting-line. Of course there were numerous exceptions: but the great majority of Christian leaders joined in the call to arms. A German chaplain wrote: "Cold steel is put into the hand of the German soldier, and he must use it without hesitation and without mercy. He must thrust the bayonet between the ribs of the enemy. He must shatter the butt-end of his rifle on the enemies' skulls. That is his holy duty, thereby he is serving God." "How diabolically un-Christian!" you say. But wait. In our own enlightened land there were not lacking eminent ecclesiastics who could tell us that the devil would have counselled neutrality, but Christ had put his sword into our hands, that our business was "to keep on killing Germans," that it was useless to "stroke barbarities," that the individual had no right to follow his private conscience when it conflicted with the command of the State, and so on. One advocated in a Sunday newspaper the execution of some German prisoners in revenge for the murder of Captain Fryatt; another in a sermon insisted on reprisals for the German air-raids, with an impassioned appeal to the ghosts of Nelson and Drake! A prison chaplain expostulated thus with some conscientious objectors: "The trouble with you young men is that you have been reading the New Testament too much. What you want is

a good course in the book of Joshua!" Leading Free Churchmen wrote articles and read papers at meetings and assemblies, setting limits to the Sermon on the Mount, and proving the religious position of the C.O. "fundamentally unsound." The language used was of course not always or even usually vituperative or extreme. One would speak mildly of "untimely virtues"; another would write in dubious tones, "I am not a pacifist, but I can see that the chief fault of the conscientious objector is to have taken Jesus and His Gospel too seriously, for every religious supporter of the war has felt the ghastly incongruity between war and Christ." But there was a remarkable unanimity on the main issue. Even those who, to their credit, spoke and worked in defence of the civil and religious freedom of pacifists, usually made it clear that they did not personally agree with them. Worse than that, the Christian laity frequently turned the cold-shoulder on the objector in their midst. Much was written and much was said, not only about the greatness of self-sacrifice, but about the object of the war being to end war, about the great religious awakening that life in the trenches would bring, and about the glorious future in store for us and the world if only this last contest could be won.

Well, the Church and her leaders had their way. The pacifists and objectors were publicly routed.

Criticized and ostracized in the Church, despised and reviled by Society, transported, imprisoned, and in part disfranchized by the State—they were effectually prevented from compromising to any serious extent the collective voice of Christendom. They might put forward their arguments, and answers on some detached points were not denied them: but the unanimous and emphatic *vox populi* relieved the Church's teachers of the necessity of providing any systematic apologia for belligerent Christianity. Circumstances exempted them from the *onus probandi*, and laid it on the shoulders of the dissentient minority, to whom nobody was obliged to listen longer than he chose. One scholar, indeed, put forth a treatise on *The Christian Ethic of War*; but he established the rightfulness of the Christian use of arms only by vague references to salvation by blood in the Cross (regardless of the difference between yielding one's own life and taking another's), by erecting an unreal antithesis between love and righteousness, and by frankly setting aside the definite ethical teaching of Jesus. The Church, the Government, and the populace had their way. The issue was fought to a finish; the knock-out blow delivered; the cause of righteousness and Christianity vindicated—with the results that all men know. Where is that reign of universal peace to which German militarism was the one great obstacle? Where is that religious revival for which the

fires of Divine discipline were to have prepared us? Why does the Kingdom of God tarry when such unstinted sacrifices have been made on its behalf? How comes it that the war waged in defence of justice and right involved, both as an indispensable accompaniment and as a natural consequence, such innumerable injustices, such intolerable wrongs? The Church thought it right, with all due respect to Jesus and his Sermon, to support the war. Is it well with the Church? or for that matter, with the world?

It is not as if Christian pacifism involved a refusal to accord to other honestly intended methods a genuine relative justification. It is easy to prove that the nation, not being on the whole committed to Christianity, could not therefore be expected to act according to the full Christian ethic, and that consequently it was right in doing unselfishly (let us grant) the best it knew, viz., taking the sword. But that rightness is relative—relative to its sub-Christian outlook—and consequently proves nothing for the Christian individual or group who, *ex hypothesi*, are committed to Jesus' policy. Nor can it be said that pacifism is mere negative inactivity: if the pacifist is true to his Christian convictions, he is, man for man, a stronger force for peace and a better defender of others than the man-at-arms. To say that there are evils against which Jesus' policy is in the long run impotent is to pronounce Jesus wrong for adhering to

his policy when in the particular case it meant defeat, and so to shut one's eyes to the moral triumphs of the Cross. But all this was somehow a sealed book to the Church of the war-period. She had—and for centuries had had—within her grasp the secret mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven,

But ever, ever this farewell to Heaven,
Welcome to earth—this taking death for life—
This spurning love and kneeling to the world—
Oh Heaven, it is too often and too old!

Let me not be misunderstood. Clear and strong as I hold the case for Christian pacifism to be, and hard as I find it to understand the refusal of so many enlightened Christians to adopt it, I eagerly disclaim the intention of casting a slur or passing a judgment on the character of any, or of calling in question anyone's sincerity. Nor do I forget that for many Christian teachers this problem of war was, and still is, a very perplexing problem, with many sides to it, a topic as wide as the moors and crossed by as many devious paths.¹ But it has

¹ It would lead us too far afield to discuss all aspects of the problem in detail, and I may be permitted to refer to the fuller treatment I have attempted in *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (Headley, 1919), *The Guidance of Jesus for To-day* (Allen and Unwin, 1920), pp. 146-174, an article on "The Fellowship of His Sufferings" in *The Interpreter* for October 1921, and a pamphlet entitled *An Appeal to the People of the Christian Church*, published November 1919, by The Fellowship of Reconciliation (17, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).

to be remembered that the right solution of a moral problem usually involves some measure of moral sacrifice due to the conflict of two or more principles and the need of sacrificing the lesser in order to preserve the greater. (A missionary, for instance, cannot give his wife and children that measure of service which otherwise it would be his duty to give them.¹) Moral objections to pacifism, therefore, are not *necessarily* fatal objections. Just as it is a logical fallacy to assume that an objection to an argument amounts to a disproof of it, so it is an ethical fallacy to refrain from adopting a course so long as it is open to a single moral difficulty. The only test as to whether an objection is fatal or not is the possibility or impossibility of building up, in deference to it, an alternative system of argument sounder, *i.e.*, less open to objection, than the one under criticism. Now this is precisely what Christian belligerents have never done. It is easy work to pin the unfortunate pacifist to the wall with searching questions about the mysterious Christian ethic of property, or with hair-raising hypotheses of imminent outrage, and then to profess yourself dissatisfied with his answers, and therefore unable to agree with him. But do not imagine that that is enough to justify

¹ That Jesus contemplated such occasions of a "conflict of duties" is clear from Matt. x. 34-39=Luke xii. 51-53+xiv. 26-27.

your belligerency. If his position is not free from difficulty, what about your own? Your attempt to pin him to the wall comes too late. For you are already pinned to the wall yourself by your commitments as a Christian. If you reject his pacifism, the onus is on you, not simply of putting posers to him, but of producing as an alternative a systematic ethic which at one and the same time is in harmony with the mind of Christ and yet candidly professes its belief in conquering wrong by the wholesale infliction of bloody injuries.

It ill becomes any Christian to sit in judgment on his fellow-Christians; and that rôle once more I emphatically disclaim. In writing what I have written I have assumed no more than the brotherly privilege of comparing notes. Nor is it wise rashly to don the prophetic mantle. Yet thus far will I venture. I call upon all thinking and whole-hearted Christians to put their minds afresh to the uncompleted task of grasping clearly the purport of the Saviour's Cross, its close dependence on his ethical teaching, and the meaning of both for Christian conduct. And I voice my conviction that, so long as this task is neglected or unfinished, so long as full use is not being made of the open revelation of God long since granted to us, for so long must the Church expect to reap—in impoverishment and feebleness—the natural consequences of her shortcoming.

CHAPTER VII

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me.—JESUS.

IN endeavouring to see and to say how the conclusions arrived at in the last two chapters bear upon the work of the Sunday-School, I am desirous of forestalling two possible forms of criticism.

(1) In the views here presented to the reader there is no intention of depreciating or discouraging work already being done on other lines. Questions of method are, after all, subsidiary to the question of the main enterprise; and genuine devoted work among children will not fail of its reward in true success, even though the method be not the best imaginable. What is here said is said with every desire to acknowledge and honour all real service, whether its form and method tally with the following scheme or not.

(2) The policy here put forward is not offered as a mere doctrinaire ideal, in which all practical difficulties are ignored. Several years' experience of actual teaching lie behind the theory. Further, let it be conceded at once that no principle

of method, however true and excellent, can be carried out everywhere without qualification and adaptation to conditions. But the obvious need of such occasional modification in detail does not invalidate the main argument, in regard to which the claim may justly be put forward that practical experience completely vindicates it.

Our study of the early Christian methods of propaganda led us to the conclusion that two main types of method could be broadly distinguished—that, namely, of the spoken or written word, and that of personal influence or friendship. Both are important, but the latter more so than the former. Men are assisted and guided and made responsive to the call and quest of God partly through being wisely taught by word of mouth, through having the whole counsel of God expounded to them by preachers and writers, but partly also and chiefly through being brought within the ambit of consecrated Christian life. Now the Sunday-School offers a quite unique field for the enlargement of the Kingdom of God; and for this reason it is so essential a department of the Church's activities that very considerable sacrifices are worth while to keep it in a state of maximum efficiency. Its advantage consists in the chance it gives of applying our missionary endeavours just where—owing to the special impressionableness of children and their ready

susceptibility to the influence of others—the conditions give us the maximum of leverage. We do not need to institute any comparison between the value of a child and that of an adult; nor is there any question of abandoning the effort to secure adult converts: but after all, only a limited amount of influence is possible for each of us, and the needs of the case demand that we shall dispense it according to the best economy we know, *i.e.* (other things being equal), where the result of our efforts is likely to be greatest. And like the work of a normal pastorate, the work of a Sunday-School teacher includes the use of both kinds of propagandist effort: it gives regular and definite opportunities for specific instruction (and it is of the utmost consequence that this should be as wisely chosen and skilfully imparted as possible), and—most important of all—it furnishes a basis for a more constant, more deep-going, more influential fellowship than is on the whole open to the average pastor. I propose to say no more here about the actual duties of teaching, not because I regard the matter as in any way unimportant, but because a great deal of thought has been given to the subject in recent years, and abundant help is available for those who will inquire for it.¹ The centrality and value of personal influence and fellowship, on

¹ *E.g.* of the "Teachers and Taught" publishing house, 4, Fleet Lane, London, E.C.4.

the other hand, has been either so much taken for granted or else so much simply forgotten, that our Sunday-School system does not reflect an adequate appreciation of it; and it will therefore be desirable for us to lay some special stress upon it.

A young person's life, let us again remind ourselves, is most easily and effectively won for God, not by being handled along with many others as one in a mass, but by a standing friendship with some more mature Christian. The loving ministry of a personal friend—beginning it may be in childhood or youth, and lasting through a long term of years—is the mightiest instrument God uses for binding us to Himself. Other things often help—and sometimes powerfully: but that is stronger than all. The impact of one loving soul upon another is God's chosen channel for the working of His Spirit. Nothing less than this ideal of a personal, individual, permanent, apostolic, and pastoral friendship between the Christian adult and the child must be the basic principle of all really effective Sunday-School work. Where that is clearly recognized and acted on, success in the highest sense is obtainable, even with very imperfect instruments: without that, no improvements in our machinery (such as grading, lesson-preparation, etc.) will suffice to avert failure. The friendship we speak of will often need to commence and for some years to remain

on very elementary levels, and it will look as though much time is being wasted on puerile trifling; but such puerilities, if they have a true Christian love behind them, help slowly and surely to plant the roots of a permanent attachment that will blossom later into spiritual fellowship. No good chance of course will be missed of securing an explicit decision for Christ; but in any case the relationship so established will nurture in the child that healthy and deep human self which ripens—often by unconscious or half-conscious stages—into a nature dedicated to the Highest. Such a ministry as this blesses him that gives and him that takes:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

We must turn now to consider what this central principle involves in the practical duties of the teacher. His work lies within the existing organization of the Sunday-School; but teachers and organizers will alike agree that the organization, whatever its needs or its merits, must not be allowed to take precedence of the cause which it exists to serve, or to hinder the best possible use of the teacher's efforts.

(a) One of the most obvious corollaries of our principle is that each class should have one teacher at a time and one only. For it is obviously very difficult if not impossible for children to

form a deep attachment with *two* persons whom they are meeting in the same place and under the same conditions on alternate Sundays. Whether both or only one of the two teachers who share a class between them undertake the intensive personal work, the dual control necessarily impairs the results achieved. It is quite true that there are many teachers who work on this fortnightly system simply because that is the utmost their available time and strength permit. The option for them is not between fortnightly and weekly teaching, but between fortnightly teaching and no teaching at all. All praise to such hard-working people who generously give in this way all the energy they can spare for the good work! But in those parts of the country where the fortnightly system is most in vogue, there are large numbers of young teachers who serve on alternate Sundays only, not because that is all their strength permits them to give, but because they are labouring under the entirely erroneous impression that, so long as a class is not left teacherless on the Sunday afternoon, all the needs of the case are sufficiently met, and it matters not at all who the particular teacher may be—so long as he or she is prepared with a tolerably good lesson.

(b) A second general rule that follows inevitably from our main principle is that the teacher must keep his class as long as it exists as a class. Again let us, in order to avoid over-statement,

make at once certain reasonably demanded concessions. There are some teachers particularly fitted to take children of a certain age and not of other ages. Pleas for such narrow limitation of a teacher's scope always call for searching criticism, for they are often prompted by other considerations than true self-knowledge: they may be the outcome of timidity, modest self-distrust (a normal element in every good teacher's psychology), or mere dislike of change. But it is quite conceivable that such highly specialized talent does exist, particularly in the case of those who have trained themselves for Primary work: and where it does undoubtedly exist, it is only wise that arrangements should be adapted to suit it. Another consideration which might be held to justify changing the teacher of a class is the desirability of teacher and scholars being of the same sex after the latter have reached the age of ten. Again, if teachers for any reason cannot or do not personally befriend their scholars, obviously no loss is incurred by their being frequently relieved of their classes, and given other classes. Further, there will always be in every school a certain continual flux in the population both of teachers and scholars, so that sheer necessity will set numerous limits to the duration of a teacher's fellowship with individual scholars. Yet when all these qualifications have been made, it still remains true that the system adopted in so many schools

of "moving the classes up," *i.e.*, giving them all new teachers, every year or at some other recognized interval, virtually makes impossible that personal and permanent attachment between teacher and scholar which is the fundamental principle of Sunday-School policy. It is a clear case of a fancied necessity of organization checkmating the living purpose it was framed to serve. The fatuity of the plan can be seen clearly in this simple fact, that the disappointment and chagrin which children evince when the change is made vary in exact proportion to the success and friendliness of the teacher they are leaving. What "hardening in part" can have befallen our organizers that they feel no scruple and see no danger in rending asunder year by year those most tender and valuable ties that have begun to bind together two human souls in the holy bond of Christian friendship? Such practices as these could never have established themselves among us to the extent they have, if personal attachment between teacher and scholar had been duly recognized as the one true fundamental secret that ought to shape the whole policy of our Sunday-School enterprise. The widespread failure to grasp and apply this principle accounts in large measure for our complacent toleration of customs that effectually prevent real and thorough success.

(c) A third implicate—this time, happily, not affecting our official organization—is the need

that teachers, in aiming to build up this happy Christian friendship, should seek for frequent and suitable opportunities to exercise it. Friendship between two adults may involve frequent or rare occasions for association, according as circumstances permit or the friendship necessitates. But friendship with a child cannot be cultivated unless the meetings are fairly numerous. Naturally more than the Sunday afternoon lesson is demanded; and the more that can be given the better. How much extra is wanted and precisely of what kind it ought to be, are questions of detail the precise answers to which each teacher must discover for himself. But he may be recommended to employ diligently all those minor arts by which a child's affection can be won. A birthday letter, a visit in sickness or in health, a tea-party for one or a crowd at your own home, a ramble *à deux* or a picnic in the country, a share in the children's games, hobbies, and other interests, the loan of a book, the joint study of wild-flowers, and last but not least, a holiday-camp—these are all practical and useful means enabling you to “grapple them to your soul with hoops of steel.”

It is a fallacy to suppose that boys from poor homes cannot be got hold of without the meretricious help of a lot of military uniform and parade. It is of course true that most boys have sufficient of the barbarian in them to be attracted and overawed at the sight of an officer's decorated

costume, and respond readily to the invitation to play at soldiers. Up to a certain point much good can be done in the way of inculcating cleanliness, smartness, industry, punctuality, and so forth, by the use of military drill; and it is possible for a very few men to deal effectively in this way with a large number of boys. But the tendency of such treatment is to discourage, if not to quench, the boy's individual initiative: he is given no incentive to think for himself: his highest conception of duty is to be smart and accurate in obeying orders, and to help his squad or his company to do well in competitive efforts. It is no substitute—as a Christian method of work—for that personal fellowship between man and boy which alone is adequate to the development of a full Christian character and which is perfectly possible without any military apparatus at all. But apart from that, the regular use of military terms and performance of military drill, the wearing of a military or quasi-military uniform, the constant handling of a rifle (whether real or dummy), the practising of firing- and sword-exercise—all these things inevitably dispose the boy's mind favourably to real military life.¹ Officers may deny that the object of their organization is military; they may keep the religious side as much to the fore

¹ "Men can hardly entertain themselves with military manœuvres without the dawning of the wish 'If only it were the real thing!'" (J. S. Mackenzie, *Outlines of Social Philosophy*, p. 251).

as they can: yet the logic of facts is irresistible. The boys rarely or never hear so much as a hint that there is any question in the minds of their teachers about the legitimacy of the military profession from the Christian point of view: and whether they hear such hints or not, their own minds are prematurely set in a certain direction, and that the wrong one. The presence and patronage of eminent military officials is sought for on occasions of display; and various tangible privileges can be secured by favour of the War Office. The truly religious object of the institution may be explained emphatically and clearly to visiting generals: but these military friends and benefactors know perfectly well on which side their bread is buttered, as the speeches they normally make at parades and inspections abundantly testify. It would indeed be almost too much to expect of them that they should not count it one of the chief merits of such organizations that, besides being religious and moral, it furnishes a priceless nursery and training-ground for recruits for the Army. Of the Boy Scouts it may be said that the danger, though considerably less than in the "Brigades," is yet present with them, seeing that their professed object is even less definitely and explicitly Christian than that of The Boys' Brigade, that their procedure admits a large element of "Empire-Day" morality, and that the organization is apparently to a large extent

conducted and assisted by military men. The undoubted advantages of which all these organizations can boast are thus purchased at too heavy a price—the sacrifice, namely, of a fundamental item in Christian ethics, the absolute rejection of war—and they can be obtained without any such sacrifice by those workers who are keen and wise enough to enter into personal and sympathetic friendship with boys in their simple capacity of Sunday-School scholars.

It would hardly be possible to exaggerate either the urgency of the need for the personal work of which we have been speaking, or the excellence and directness of those opportunities for it which the Sunday-School provides. While the Kingdom of God has room for many various ministries inspired by the one Spirit, surely no more central and immediate service can be rendered to the highest interests of humanity than the really effective formation of Christian characters.¹ Concentration on such special work in the Sunday-School is not of course the task of every Christian, nor does it imply any indifference to or depreciation of the countless other activities, within the Church and without, whereby men may serve one another in love. But that there is room

¹ To quote a casual testimony: "My long experience has convinced me that no work gives a better return than that done amongst boys and girls in the Sunday school" (Mr. J. Harrop White, Town Clerk of Mansfield, Notts.—quoted in *Daily News*, 28th December, 1922).

for an enormous numerical strengthening of this particular form of the priesthood of the Christian laity cannot be doubted. Much service is already being rendered on behalf of children: many of them have the benefit of Christian homes and a circle of Christian friends. But observation of results shows how comparatively few are the cases in which the moral and spiritual needs of the growing generation are being really met. And it is deplorable that so large a proportion of the young men and women in the Church—many of them impatient at the slowness and debility of the Church, and eager for the dawn of the millennium—fail to see in the Sunday-School teacher's task the most genuine and promising form of the service of humanity.¹ The prevalent blindness, or shyness, or whatever it is, would seem to be but a special phase of that failure (to which allusion has already been made²) on the part of the laity to co-operate in the priestly functions of the ministry. The most crying need of the Christian Church to-day is

¹ I remember seeing some time ago a book-review in a religious periodical, in which the question was raised, What form of Christian service was romantic and attractive enough to be put before our young men to induce them to devote to the Church that same heroic self-sacrifice of which the war had shown them to be capable? The review concluded with a comment to the effect that nothing so ordinary as handing round a collection-bag or *taking a Sunday-School class* would suffice to meet the need!

² See above, pp. 72-74 and 78f.

a revival—both extensive and intensive—of the personal ministry of friendship among the young; and it is therefore incumbent upon all to ask themselves whether they are taking their due share of responsibility for supplying the need.

One thing of course must not be forgotten in framing any serious policy for the advancement of the Kingdom of God; and that is, that, as long as human freedom is a reality, there can be no mathematical certainty of success in any particular case. Jesus lived the perfect life among men, and yet they crucified him. And every Christian must hold himself ready, if it should so fall out, to encounter the same irrational and disastrous opposition. God forces none of His children to be reasonable and good; and the crucifixion of Jesus will always remain the great illustration and proof of the price God is prepared to pay for that human freedom without which there can be no real fellowship between ourselves and Him. We may try our best to win others, and yet fail—through no fault of our own. So too no *modus operandi* in the Sunday-School, however carefully determined and however well-approved, is absolutely certain to be successful with any particular child. Every disciple must be willing to bear his cross. At the same time, God's resources and patience are infinite, and He is not going to go out defeated from His world or from the

life of any one of His children; and further, there is that in the human make-up which, without prejudice to man's freedom, yet prevents him finding ultimate satisfaction anywhere except in communion with God. The human soul is *naturaliter Christiana*; God has made us in His own image and for Himself, so that our hearts are unquiet until they find their rest in Him. While, therefore, we cannot calculate on our success as evangelists in any particular case within any measurable or stated time, we do know—as our Lord knew when he went to the Cross—that, man being what he is and God being what He is, God's purpose will prosper in our hand, and that by our knowledge and service we shall surely make many righteous. It will, then, be right for us to count on success, and to ask whether the methods which we are urged to adopt are those which, without prejudice to the incalculability of the human factor, promise best to give us our heart's desire.

I would venture, therefore, to plead that the method of Sunday-School work advocated in the foregoing pages is more likely than any other to enable us to achieve two of the main objects over which our schools at present often have very considerable difficulty.

(a) It will enable us to retain our senior scholars long enough to attach them permanently to the service of the Church. At present, as every Christian worker knows, there is a dangerous

gap in our ranks.¹ We have no difficulty in getting the children. A child is not a difficult person to entertain: he is pretty completely under parental control—at least, sufficiently so to ensure his attendance at Sunday-School if his parents send him: there are no overpowering counter-attractions: at school he meets his friends, and is for the most part tolerably well amused. So that, even supposing he is not strongly befriended by his teacher, his regular attendance is not seriously imperilled. But when he gets on toward his middle and late teens, circumstances take on a new complexion. It is not so easy for his parents to get him to do as they wish: he becomes critical: he cannot endure being bored, and it is not so easy to avoid boring him as it was in his tenderer years: not only does he feel and enjoy his freedom, but outside attractions multiply. He prefers to stroll about on Sunday afternoons—possibly in the company of girls of his own age and at a very similar stage of development. His attendance at school becomes irregular. There is often no particular attraction for him there, no dearly-loved and honoured senior friend whose company he enjoys and

¹ "It is nothing short of tragic that after all the teaching and training during the years from five upwards, such a large proportion—probably fifty to eighty per cent.—drop off at about the age of fifteen, and in the stress and danger of adolescent years are not in touch with those Christian influences of Church, school and club which are so much needed" (*The Church as a School of Christian Education*, p. 76).

whose wishes, with all his show of independence, he likes to observe. He has as yet no strongly developed feeling as a Christian and a Churchman such as would keep him loyal to the institution for its own sake: and so his place in the old class knows him no more. Off he goes to swell the ranks of the vast army of idle, shallow-pated, and pleasure-loving youths of our time. Had he learned during the years of his boyhood to bear the gracious yoke and light burden of a real personal friendship, the chances are that the sense of loyalty to one whom he loves and respects (though perhaps he would be the last to describe the relationship in those terms) would have kept him, not simply in attendance at the school—that by itself would be of little value—but in the path of a growing appreciation of Christian values, until he had reached a stage when the sense of religious responsibility would itself secure him from the danger of future lapse. The actual sight of a group of young men of between seventeen and twenty years of age sitting patiently and steadily at the back of the school while very elementary hymns were being sung by the juniors in front, may not reflect great credit on the organization of the school (for what would our graders say?), but does at least testify to the power of a personal attachment.

(b) The second advantage to be claimed for our method has already been hinted at. It is

that this method supplies better than any other a fertile seed-ground for successive crops of teachers. Subordinate as is the influence of the actual teaching when compared with that of the personal influence, the teaching nevertheless does make its mark, and impresses the mark all the more deeply the older the scholar grows. If therefore the teacher, besides setting a personal example as propagandist of the Christian faith, embodies in his class-teaching, with increasing clearness and emphasis as time goes on, the Christian's duty *quâ* Christian to be a fisher of men, and further exerts his personal influence when the individual scholar attains the right age, there is fair hope that that scholar will be willing to pass without a break into the ranks of the teachers, and to educate his own little group up to the same status of willingness-to-serve, to which he and his class-mates have themselves been led. There would thus be set up an accelerated process whereby continually growing numbers of young people would become teachers, and so continually growing numbers of children would be secured for the Church. The process is indeed much less showy than those more immediately prosperous military methods whereby larger numbers can be attracted and handled; but it builds on more solid foundations than they do, and what it loses through the necessary slowness and gradualness of its initial stages, it more than makes up by its more radical

thoroughness, its truer ethic, and the acceleration it involves in its self-reproductive character. What more direct road can there be to the establishment of the Kingdom of God in human society?

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The harvest is great, but the labourers are few. So beg the Owner of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.
—JESUS.

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send? and who will go for us?" Then said I, "Here am I: send me."
—ISAIAH.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.—JESUS.

THE object of the quest with which we started was in all its essentials gained at the end of our fifth chapter. We there arrived at the conclusion that the one dominating purpose of life—comprehensive enough to embrace all good and healthy activity, altruistic enough to do full justice to the needs and claims of our brother-men, and Christian enough to be worthy of the name we boast of bearing—is none other than the extension of the Kingdom of God ("the Word ever taking possession of more and more souls," as Origenes says) through the hallowing of all human intercourse, whether slight and brief or intimate and lasting, by obedience to the great commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves. That conclusion once

attained, we then proceeded to a brief study of organized Christian work in the light of it. We touched on the Christian ministry, both professional and lay, the conduct of Christian worship, the ethical witness of the Church, and the unique opportunity open for propaganda along the most promising lines in the work of the Sunday-School. In doing so, occasion arose for putting forward an appeal for an adequate supply of suitable candidates for the professional ministry of the Church, and an appeal of still wider range for Sunday-School teachers prepared to make full use of their chances. Our attention too was naturally concentrated a good deal on what is normally known as "organized Christianity." But it is of course obvious that, however urgent the need for ministerial candidates, the number of such candidates can never be more than a tiny proportion of the Christian community, that, true as it is that multitudes of young Christians who do not teach in the Sunday-School ought to do so, yet here again even all those eligible for definite teaching-work form only a minority of the whole body of the Church, and that, important as is the specific work of "organized Christianity," not all Christian activity and service falls under this category.

It remains, therefore, for us to conclude our study and gather the scattered threads of it together by a last rehearsal of our ruling theme

in its widest aspect, comprising but at the same time transcending the functions of Churches and ministers, choirs and congregations, Sunday-Schools and teachers, and affecting the outlook-on-life of all who profess and call themselves Christians.

Put in the simplest terms, our conclusion means the consecration of *all* life's activities to the advancement of the Kingdom of God as their end, and the persistent use of these activities meanwhile as occasions for displaying the fundamental ethic of the Kingdom, viz., love. There must be no purpose in life, whether immediate or ulterior, which cannot be thought of as contributing in some way to the extension of God's loving control over human lives. Everything must subserve the *summum bonum*. We do not give this principle the meaning given to it by mediæval and even modern Catholicism, viz., that a life wholly devoted to God cannot be one involving commercial, domestic, and civil responsibilities, true as it is that the majority of men undertaking such responsibilities probably do not regard them primarily as religious or Christian or even altruistic services. The old dualism of "religious" and lay morality has never been admitted by Protestants, though Protestants have a long way to go in discovering the full meaning of their healthy theoretical identification of the two. If their position is to be justified, it must mean that Christians

not only learn to regard their business and their politics as definitely religious undertakings, but that they are prepared to sacrifice any commercial or political enterprise in which they may find themselves involved, if it cannot be represented as a genuine and wholesome service rendered to some legitimate human need. The brewer, the bookmaker, the armament manufacturer, and men in other even more obviously questionable callings, will need to make their choice between the claims of God and humanity on the one hand and security and affluence on the other.

But there is nothing to prevent those engaged in the great majority of businesses from visualizing their own business work as a service that may be honestly and lovingly rendered to their fellow-men, in exchange for fair remuneration. That is not to say that all is well with the business world: such indeed is not the case. But it does affirm that there is nothing in the *essence* of modern business that can be pronounced necessarily unbrotherly and unchristian. That the dilemmas facing Christian business-men are often extremely perplexing and painful is doubtless true: but such men are unfortunately too often in the habit of feeling forced to admit that, Christians as they are on Sundays and in their homes, they must be something else during business-hours and in their mills and offices. Such an admission is not only exceedingly

harmful for the confessor's own moral life, but it is a needless surrender in theory—and sometimes in practice too—to the powers of evil. Such dismal ethics are possibly an example of the practical man's occasional need of a little help from the trained theorist, in order to avoid misrepresenting himself and incidentally the Christian faith he professes.

The task of discovering what is the true *summum bonum* and of directing the whole energies of life to the pursuit of it is by no means a new feature in the science of duty.

Where [cries Epiktetos] is progress (in Stoic virtue to be looked for)? If anyone of you, . . . from the moment when he rises in the morning, keeps and guards these principles—bathes like (one that is) trustworthy, eats like a man of self-respect, (and) likewise on each occasion that arises labours to achieve his main tasks, as the runner (does) with his running, and the voice-trainer with his voice-training—he is the one who is really progressing and who has not set out on his travels in vain.¹

One cannot help observing here the conscious self-centredness of the Stoic morality, and connecting therewith at least in some measure the less attractive and less successful qualities which characterized that otherwise lofty system of ethics. The *summum bonum* contemplated by Epiktetos in this passage is dispassionate peace of mind, to be obtained through concentrated self-culture. That did not necessarily

¹ *Dissert.* I. iv. 18, 20f.

exclude kindness to others, but neither did it necessarily include it: hence its inadequacy, despite its truth and value, as an ultimate standard. But Epiktetos has grasped the idea of the need of ethical unity in life; and if in his company we also can grasp it, and then bring it into our contemplation of the *summum bonum* of Jesus, we shall be able to see the true supremacy and comprehensiveness of his ideal of the Kingdom of God as a cause to which everything must be made to contribute, a possession for the sake of which—as for a pearl of great price—a man will be wise to part, if need be, with everything else he values.

“For the sake of the Kingdom of God” . . . or “for the sake of the Gospel” . . . one can and ought cheerfully to forsake all, one must unreservedly put to the hazard (all) good things of only relative value. . . . For the possession of the highest good guarantees the satisfaction of all (our) legitimate needs; but for this reason the active struggle for it involves a decisive cheapening of the good things of the present (order). Thus, in the moral sense of the individual ethic, (our) existence—which otherwise flutters about and splits up in pursuit of a thousand aims—can and will acquire unity, (and our) life-work positive value. In all these respects we find in the conception of the Kingdom of God a Christian parallel to the conception of a “highest good” introduced by the ancient philosophy and in part treated as central by the modern.¹

If, in order that life may be unified, every act, word, and thought is to be made to help on this single grand purpose, that is possible

¹ H. J. Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, vol. i. p. 253.

only on the supposition that every such utterance of oneself will produce a consequence, in the form of influence on others, of the same moral colour as itself, that "whatever a man sows, that will he also reap." And however little we may like it, or realize it, this is in fact true. We are already in every self-utterance either facilitating the union between God and one of His children, or else "putting a stumbling-block or hindrance in a brother's way." What may be the ultimate effect of such an offence on a single human life and through that life on the lives of others and on the world, we cannot tell. It may be tragically great. No human eye can watch the path of that endless series of causes and effects which every human act starts running.

Men might as well face their responsibility [writes an American author]. We are free to make this earth the Kingdom of Hell or the Kingdom of Heaven. Every unjust act, every deed of selfishness and greed, every untruth, every abuse of power, every lustful act or licentious look tends to make possible the Kingdom of Hell. If we live falsely, selfishly, dishonestly, we are making a direct contribution to strife, chaos, hopelessness.¹

The issue upon which the good or evil consequences of our actions depend is whether or no we are in these actions sincerely and wisely trying to behave lovingly, in the sense in which Jesus exhibited and explained the meaning of the term. We are not here speaking of those

¹ Principal A. M. Sanford in *The Journal of Religion*, September 1922, pp. 522f.

undoubted cases of real dilemma in which genuine and intelligent Christians are sometimes involved and which make them feel uncertain as to what concrete course love would dictate. But if, apart altogether from any such honest dilemma, we allow ourselves to violate knowingly the law of love, then, though we may seek to justify our action by saying that "Business is business," or that the other man deserves it, or has done the same or will do the same to others, or perhaps that he will misinterpret love as weakness and take a mean advantage of it, or that what we are doing is demanded by patriotism or social usage or that we are doing it "for king and country,"—the effect of it nonetheless is but to thrust this suffering and tormented world a little further down into the morass of blood and agony into which it has fallen.

On the other hand, as our American friend continues, "there is a glorious alternative . . . which may be realized if we bring ourselves fully into line with the principles of brotherhood exemplified in Jesus." It is to no purpose that we chafe and fret against the evils of our time, unless we are heartily at work opposing and destroying them. And even so, there is no use in chafing and fretting at our apparent powerlessness in face of the enormous mass and might of evil. The most effective opposition we can offer to sin and suffering is the cheerful and efficient payment of our own maximum contribu-

tion of effort and energy. Just as the evil that we may do by unloving words and deeds is incalculable, so too is the good we may do by conduct of another kind. No occasion that brings us into contact with another life is too trivial to be made into an opportunity for brotherly kindness: and we may be confident that, as the crop is of the same kind as the seed but indefinitely larger, so, as Thomas à Kempis says, "Whatsoever is done of charity, be it never so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it becometh wholly fruitful." The Christian Crusade consists chiefly in this—in so ordering our life throughout absolutely every activity and interest in which we are engaged, that God shall be able to use our love for our fellow-men as a means of obtaining for Himself a nearer approach to their hearts.

Have you ever come across this description of "The Hands of God"?—

"By your warm handshake,
By your cheery laugh,
By your visit and chat and news,
By your talk of old times,
By your letter of sympathy,
By your interest in the deeper things of life,
By your card of invitation,
By the prompt reply you write,
By the book or paper you can lend,
By your tactful help—

"God may be able to draw near to those whom He could not reach without you."¹

¹ *The Crusader*, 23rd July, 1920.

And if the brief and trivial meetings of life may be fraught thus with momentous consequences, much mightier are those deep and lasting associations which love knits up between us and to which we give the sacred name of friendship. We have already on a former page spoken at some length of the inestimable value of friendship as a channel by which all that is "likest God within the soul" of one man may reach the soul of another. But it may be permissible to linger, in our concluding lines, on a theme so fundamental, so sublime. We have all known a little as recipients of the enrichment which intimacy with another confers on us.

O friend, my bosom said,
Through thee alone the sky is arched,
Through thee the rose is red,
All things through thee take nobler form
And look beyond the earth,
And is the mill-round of our fate,
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me too thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair.¹

Now Jesus presents himself to men as the Son and Revealer of a God who, as Father, is the Friend of all men: and the quintessence of the Christian view of life is that friendliness is at the heart of the universe. This may be an unconventional term to use of the Divine Being;

¹ Lines prefixed by Emerson to his essay on *Friendship*.

but, if the word "Father" with all its suggestions of human limitation be a not unworthy title by which God may be known, the word Friend would seem to be open to just as little objection. God as the Friend of man—first, foremost, and all the time: the One who above all others delights in our company, and has high ambitions for the best that we can attain to: the One who does us the honour, not of leaving us "tame in earth's paddock as its prize," but of calling us out to bear the heat and burden of the day shoulder to shoulder with Him; the One who bears in full all that we have to bear, and often bears also the pangs of despised love: the One who shrinks not from utter self-sacrifice if so be that He may win us to Himself—such is the Creator and Master of the Universe. In the confused vision of the Apocalypse, one flash at least of truest insight shines forth—in the midst of the throne of God was a Lamb looking as if it had been slain. Self-immolation in love for others and for the sake of others—that is the key to the structure of the Universe. And being that, it is the key too to human goodness. In the confused vision of the Church, one affirmation at least is beyond doubt or question—Jesus is the Lord of all good life, and the Way to the Father. His standards of value are the true standards. And he too comes forth as the Friend of men. His battle-cry is the conquest of sin in the sinner by becoming his friend. We

watch him at the work, urged on to untiring effort by his burning love and sympathy, wearied and foredone, not by the magnitude of his efforts alone, but by the folly and blindness of the leaders of his race. We see him gazing at that crowd of ordinary people flocking towards him, and realizing with a heavy heart that even the physical conditions of human fellowship meant that he and his faithful disciples were too few to befriend all these as they needed to be befriended. He stood there gazing at them, the ally and helper of all that was good and pure, the foe of all that was wrong and hurtful, in each of those lives. But, limited as he was, it was not in helpless impotence that at last he breathed the words: "Beg the Owner of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest": it was as the Master who alone holds in his keeping the plan that will fit the task.

Reader, if you and I have been able to enter so far into the mind and will of Jesus as to be able to follow him to this point with complete sympathy, there will be a step further we shall have to take together. For we cannot honestly offer that prayer to the Owner of the harvest without acknowledging that it contains and involves the answer to itself. For God is unable to send forth labourers into His harvest if they won't go; and He is ready to send all who will go. If then we hear Him saying in response to our prayer: "*Whom shall I send, and who will*

go for Me?" the only response open to us is that which Isaiah made when he heard the God of his temple-vision ask the same question: "Here am I; send me."

And the reaping to which we are sent is the Christian Crusade. None of our metaphors is spacious enough to set it forth in all its grand and dreadful reality, for besides being a reaping, it is also a struggle. We are called to go forth, not against flesh and blood, but against the power of sin and folly: it is our part "to ride abroad redressing human wrong," not in the picturesque way of mediæval chivalry, but in the still harder warfare of love and service. And there is a great and abiding joy in it—the joy of comradeship, the joy of battle, and the joy of nearness to our Leader.

Lord of the brave, who call'st Thine own
In love's fair name to fearless war,
Behold us where God's musters are,
His viewless banner o'er us blown.

Lo! we that dare the all-holy fight,
Our soldier-oath we pledge to-day;
Our soldier-hands 'neath Thine we lay,
Dread Captain of the hosts of Light.

In love's fair name to battle sore,
Lord of the brave, lead on Thine own,
The viewless banner o'er us blown,
A host of Christ for evermore.

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